

QUEST OF FAME (a Novel) by **ARTHUR S. RIGGS**

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THE SMART SET

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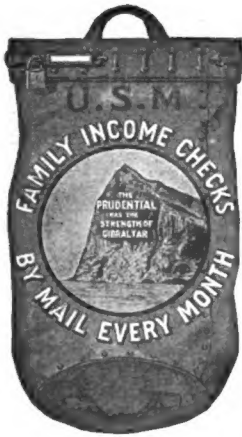


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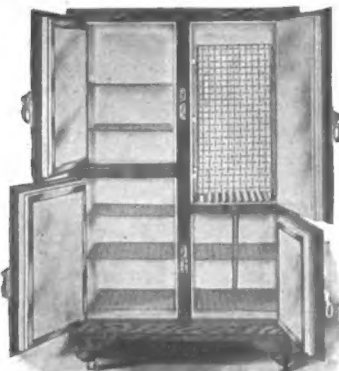
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A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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IN QUEST OF FAME

A Story of America's Next War

By ARTHUR STANLEY RIGGS

EDITH ARNOLD stepped from the Pullman in the Washington station and looked about her anxiously. Her father was nowhere to be seen, and she wondered if he had missed her telegram or was too much occupied on the floor of the Senate chamber to meet her.

"Take my things out and get me a cab," she told the gray-uniformed porter who stood attentively beside her. "Here are my checks, too. Find out when I can get my trunks. They ought to be on this train."

Obediently the negro touched his cap and hurried off with the hand baggage, Edith following more leisurely through the crowds surging out to board a departing train. At the wickets dividing the train-platform from the waiting-rooms and offices she was seized from behind and, turning quickly, found herself in her father's arms.

"I didn't mean to be late, little girl," apologized the old miner, eying her affectionately. "We had a debate on, and I couldn't get away as soon as I expected."

Edith laughed. He was the same old father, just as natural as ever, and she told him so. "I'm mighty glad to get back to my dad," she declared as they stepped into the cab, and driver and porter began piling her light trunks on top of the vehicle. "Is Aunt Nellie here yet?"

"No, she's still in Barnstable. But I've sent for her. She ought to be here in a day or two."

"I hope it won't upset her plans too much to come back," Edith mused thoughtfully. "I hate to think I may be spoiling her visit."

"Don't worry. Nellie is only too glad to get back to Washington. I believe she enjoys opening the house and fussing around more than anything else."

"More than I would, at any rate," Edith averred as the cab stopped before the hotel.

"Now," announced her father briskly, when she was installed in her room, next to his suite and overlooking the Avenue, "don't bother to dress much if you're tired. We can dine here in my sitting-room if you like. I'm sorry I can't stay long. I've got to go back at nine o'clock."

"Why?" she coaxed. "Is the debate still on? Can't they get along without you for one evening? I don't like to see my poor old dad work so hard."

The old man beamed with pleasure and pinched her cheek. "No, can't be helped, my dear. The whole country'd go to smash if I should fail to turn up," he added jocosely, a critical eye on the menu the waiter had brought up.

"I think it would be nicer to have dinner up here," Edith said. "If you have to go back so soon we should have to hurry downstairs."

"All right; that suits me," her father rejoined, scribbling his order and dismissing the man. "But tell me, Edith, what under the sun made you

come so soon? You might as well have come on with me. Anything wrong out home?"

"Oh, no," she equivocated. "I just wanted to get here."

The Colonel looked at her sharply and she lowered her eyes. "Own up now, Edith. There's something wrong or you wouldn't have changed your plans so unexpectedly. I was amazed at your first telegram. Tell me why you came."

With an effort she met his gaze. "It was your speech," she said quietly.

"My speech! What speech?" He hesitated, genuinely surprised, but she did not answer, and a sudden light broke in upon him. "Oh! My immigration talk?"

She nodded, half defiantly.

"Well, what in heaven's name did that have to do with my daughter?"

She regarded him gravely, but the Senator's puzzled expression changed to one of amusement, and he laughed most disconcertingly.

"Well, well, child, I didn't know you were so easily frightened. Afraid you were going to lose one of your precious young lieutenants, were you?" He laughed again, leaning back in his chair and watching her closely for all his merriment. "I thought my daughter was of sterner stuff than that. You scare too quickly, my dear."

"Father!" blushed the girl, playing with her food.

"Oh, I know; I know," chuckled the old man. "I was young myself once, before you came along to make me walk straight. I know how those things go."

"But, father—"

"Well, well, well; you can't fool me! Which one is it, Edy? I'll wager I can guess the very first time."

She tried to stop him, but he was in rare good humor and the teasing was unmerciful. He saw danger ahead, and knew that only by diverting her could he escape an unpleasant questioning. But Edith was not to be put off, and at the first opportunity she attacked again.

"Now, father, stop teasing, and tell me something about this immigration

business. Do you know the whole country is talking about it—and you?"

"Certainly; it's high time they did wake up," replied the lawmaker with a smile that covered considerable uneasiness. He had no notion of letting her see through his plans.

"Yes," she resumed spiritedly, "but do you realize that the country is talking of nothing but war? Your speech has stirred people up all over. I heard a man say at dinner last night on the train that the foreign papers had copied it widely, and we were likely to find ourselves in a dilemma if we didn't look out."

"Still worrying about a vacancy in the ranks of the naval lieutenants, Edith?" he inquired with gentle sarcasm.

"Father—please stop fooling! Don't treat me as if I were a child."

A frivolous remark rose to his lips, but he checked it. "Well, my dear, it is simply that this flooding of America with criminals and paupers and all the rest has to be stopped. I urged that upon Congress, and I don't see that any harm has been done. War is the remotest of possibilities just now. Our relations with Almerania have always been of the friendliest."

"Yes, but aren't you stirring the country up for nothing, father?" she persisted.

"No, no, child. It's not anything like what you think. You're just worried for fear young Cuthbert will have to fight. There isn't one chance in ten thousand. It's impossible to take you seriously at a thing like this."

"But I am serious. Will this do you any good if you ever run for President?"

"To catch your bird, put a little salt on its tail," asserted the Colonel sententiously. "Better wait till I get the nomination. It's simply one of the usual means we have to employ to wake the people up, and that's all there is to it. It may be the salt, maybe not. If it does anything toward stopping immigration, it will be breath well spent. If not, no harm is done, and it will be forgotten in a week. You needn't be a particle frightened."

"Suppose it does come to war," she persevered, only half convinced.

"It won't be my fault. I'm not anxious to plunge the country into a struggle. We wouldn't suffer though, if one should come. Practically all the fighting would be on foreign soil or far out at sea."

Edith shuddered in spite of herself, and he noticed it. "My dear Edith," he nodded, finishing his dinner and drawing out a cigar, "there always have been wars, and I judge there always will be. You might even say they are a divine ordinance for keeping population within reasonable bounds. Read your Bible and see. If such a thing does happen—which is exceedingly unlikely—it will be scarcely felt at all here. But don't you worry; it won't. And don't look so glum, dear child. Your young lieutenant's all right."

She darted a probing glance at him, endeavoring to explore the hidden recesses of the mind she knew well enough to be certain just how far his overweening ambition might carry this brilliant self-made man. Despite his assurances and chaff, he was not admitting her into the high places of his confidence, and she intuitively knew that when he deemed it necessary to withhold his motives from her so pertinaciously, the springs of his purpose were tainted. He had shown her something of the devious ramifications of his crafty thought, it was true, but not as he had desired, for instead of allaying her fears he had merely startled her half-awake suspicions into vigor.

As he pushed back his chair, she rose with him, determined to speak out plainly and ask a question that would admit of no parrying. Was he doing this to prepare the way for a nomination at the next National Convention? But the telephone bell jangled, and her opportunity was lost as she stepped across the room to the instrument.

"Hello! . . . Yes, this is Miss Arnold. Who? Oh! Why yes, send him right up."

Her eyes sparkled and the color rose a little in her cheek as she turned back to the Senator. "It is Lieutenant

Cuthbert. I wonder how he knew so soon I was here?"

Arnold laughed. "Why, I saw the young man this afternoon as I left the Senate and told him I'd have something here tonight he might like to see."

"Father!"

"You ought to have seen him then—and you ought to look in the mir—"

But she had fled to the door in answer to the knock that announced her visitor, a tall, strongly set naval officer of some thirty years. Black haired and dark, his impressive face lighted as he bowed in the precise, rather old-fashioned way that had clung to him from his Academy days, and the eyes that would never learn to conceal his thoughts spoke plainly as he bent over Edith's cordial hand of welcome.

"Good evening, Senator. I hope I am not spoiling your dinner," he said a little stiffly, seeing the débris of the meal.

"No, no; we've just finished. Have a cigar? I'm going right back to the Senate. I was starting when your ring came. Make yourself at home. Edith will look after you. I shall probably be late, my dear, so don't be scared when you hear the door open."

"All right, dad; I don't mind. I probably won't hear you, I'm so tired."

"Would you rather I'd go, too?" inquired Cuthbert solicitously, helping the father into his fur-lined overcoat. "I can come back tomorrow evening if you prefer."

"Oh, no; I'm delighted to see you."

"What made you come back so soon? I thought you would be out in Wind River for three weeks yet. I suppose you must have missed my letter."

"No, I got it the morning I left. The postmaster very kindly brought it to me just as the train was leaving."

The aspiring young officer smiled. "Imagine that here! But I'd have done it had I been in his place."

She ignored his lead. "I came back because of dad's talk about this immigration business. It all seemed so terribly serious. What do you think?"

Cuthbert visibly shrank. He had had a faint idea that she might have

changed her plans and come early merely because she was tired of the hill country and needed the excitement and companionship of Washington, which meant himself largely.

"Why, there's nothing to think about it yet. We don't know what will happen in the future. Just now we are stagnating as usual at sea and ashore. Have you had a pleasant summer, Miss Arnold?"

"Oh, yes; I have a pleasant time whenever I go back home. Everybody knows me and I know everybody. It's like one big, sociable family out there. How did you spend your summer? You didn't tell me a thing of interest in your letter—only talked about me."

"The fellows at the Observatory say I always talk about the thing I'm most interested in at the time," he replied, naively. "You were in my mind all summer."

"How uncomfortable you must have been!"

He winced a little at the amusement in her voice. "Oh, no, I enjoyed myself greatly. I got leave for two weeks and spent a good part of it up at Nahant on the Massachusetts coast, with Senator Mowbray's family. They're delightful people."

"Ah," murmured Edith, instantly wishing she had bitten her tongue. "They are, indeed. Haven't they a beautiful place?"

"Splendid! And isn't Miss Mowbray a bully girl?"

"I like her, yes. And she is a man's girl, too—so fresh and breezy."

"She's all right," asserted the young man gallantly. "Handles a small boat as well as I can, swims like a duck, shoots, rides, plays golf—you know, an out and out good fellow."

"Yes, I know," was the smooth answer as Edith saw how the dashing Leila's airy *camaraderie* and highly-colored Irish type of beauty had impressed Cuthbert. "But tell me something more about this speech of dad's, and what it has done. What are they saying up at the Navy Department about it? Does Washington take the matter seriously?"

He looked dubious. "Oh, I don't know. It's not exactly that. You see I'm not in a very good position to know what they think. Since I got this shore detail I've been so busy I haven't been out much."

"Well, surely you know what your brother officers think."

"They never say much. We seldom think about the political side of things. Of course, if war came it would mean a lot for most of us and . . ."

Her exclamation checked him abruptly. "Ah, I didn't mean that, you know," he colored hotly and floundered on. "We get the chance to see real service, under service conditions. You understand how much that means in practical training and efficiency—it's all talk so far, Miss Arnold," he finished lamely.

"I think you are keeping something back from me," she charged with quiet emphasis. "Please conceal nothing, Lieutenant Cuthbert. I wish to know the truth of the matter."

He regarded her in perplexity, protesting that she was in a better position to know what was going on than himself.

"No; really, I know nothing except what is in the papers. Father rarely tells me much of what he is planning."

"Well," Lieutenant Cuthbert answered slowly, "it is as was said. There is not one chance in ten thousand that anything will come of it. We shall probably amend the Constitution, and then let Almerania do as she chooses."

"What could she do?"

There was something so apprehensive in her voice that he looked at her curiously as she went on: "Might that not lead to something that would cause a war?"

Her distress was so unaffected that he mistook the main cause of her agitation, and could not keep a triumphant note out of his voice while assuring her that she alarmed herself unnecessarily.

Comprehending his thought, Edith answered with celerity: "I hope you are right. War is abhorrent to me. It is unbearable to think that father might inadvertently bring it about."

But Cuthbert, feeling certain that he had not deceived himself, took his departure in high spirits and walked homeward to his rooms treading on air.

Chapter Two

A Strong Argument

SENATOR ARNOLD tossed away his cigar and, yawning openly, gazed wearily about the dim committee room, smoke-filled and boresome. The committee had been in session since noon, and no argument could be reached peaceably, though the thickening shadows proclaimed the rapid descent of the sun. Pulling out his repeater he examined it with some show of interest, observing as he saw the other members look up: "Gentlemen, I'm going to quit. We've come to a standstill. We're not a jury to be locked up all night. I'm going out for a walk. I want a breath of air. I move you, Mr. Chairman, that we continue this meeting tomorrow."

Another bored member promptly seconded the welcome motion, the Chair put it, and the eager senators filed out into the Capitol lobby, glad to get away even temporarily from a debate which threatened to be profitless. Near the big swinging doors stood a group in animated discussion, senators, representatives, lobbyists and newspaper correspondents, and Arnold strolled leisurely in their direction, willing to catch a passing word.

As he came within earshot, however, the conversation was hushed, and all eyes turned toward him as he stopped to speak to the whip of his party, who stood at the edge of the circle. "Good afternoon, Colonel Arnold," interrupted an Eastern orator. "What's doing? How's your immigration coming on?"

The politician merely laughed good-naturedly, and a correspondent remarked so that all the others could hear: "Senator, there seems to be a decided feeling of curiosity regarding your intentions. Can't you give me an idea of what you have in view?"

"Certainly, certainly, my friend," chuckled Arnold as the crowd leaned forward to drink in every word. "I'm going for a walk. Good afternoon."

He turned away indifferently, but the newsgatherer was not to be shaken off so easily. "May I come with you, sir? I have one or two questions I should like to ask, and I don't wish to detain you here."

Still smiling, the Wyoming Solon came back to the knot of men and replied: "I'm not especially in a hurry, young man. What would you like to know? I can answer you right here."

The correspondent hesitated, searching desperately for some way to baffle his numerous rivals, and finally asked: "Is it true that the Government has practically decided to employ force to settle this affair?"

It was the daring question no one had ventured to ask, even in the Senate, but the undercurrent of suspicion that swayed everyone not in the innermost councils of the anti-immigration party showed itself strongly in the strained attention which greeted the great leader's response.

"Force!" He seemed to be unpleasantly surprised. "Who said anything about using force?"

"Everybody is talking about it and wondering how it will end, sir."

"H'm, I know nothing about it." He stroked his long mustache, and the indefatigable trouble-maker tried again.

"Well, then, may I say—?"

"I'll tell you what, my friend," interrupted Arnold. "You may say to your paper that this is a matter in which it is just as well not to get excited. The public ought to suspend judgment until something definite is done. To talk of force is ridiculous. Force is out of the question. What should we use force for?"

"To stop the immigration."

Colonel Arnold laughed pleasantly. "Pooh, pooh, man; it's not necessary. The affair will adjust itself, with a little adroit help, and be forgotten in a week or so. You are trying to make mountains out of molehills."

"You think, then, that there is no

possibility of any serious disagreement between us and—"

"I do not think anything about it. There has been a lot of rash talk in the papers. It's all bosh. You fellows start a ball rolling, and before you know it, it has grown to such proportions you cannot stop it. Now be sensible and let this thing drop. We can take care of it right here in the Senate without making a particle of trouble. If the newspapers will let us alone, we will have everything fixed up in a few weeks to the satisfaction of the country."

"Then you have never even considered the possibility of a disagreement, an unpleasantness?" insisted the newspaper man determinedly.

"Gentlemen," appealed the Wyoming man, slipping into his overcoat, "will you be kind enough to chain this young man while I go for my walk? He puts his own words into my mouth and then tries to fasten the responsibility upon me. No, no, my friend; I know nothing but what I said in my speech. If you study that, you understand the situation. When the matter comes up for discussion in the Senate, we shall be able to deal with it properly."

"Is that all you care to say, sir?"

"Why, surely. I believe I stated nothing in my speech but facts that everybody knows, and I think I have the support of the country when I demand some remedy for such an evil."

For all his smile and genial greetings to acquaintances as he left the Capitol, the Senator's frame of mind was somewhat disturbed, and forgetting his walk he headed directly toward the Executive Mansion. As he went, he tried to plan out the future in such a way as to be able to convince the astute politician upon whom his energies were to be bent that he knew more of what was coming than the other could even guess at. With the correspondents already so sure of what was going to happen and the outsiders in the House and Senate so eager to get news from any source, he must act promptly and forcibly.

Yet a hot oven has spoiled many a good pie, and he must be careful not to let the forces he was handling so gingerly

get beyond his control. Too much haste would ruin all his plans. He must see to it that, whatever happened, America would appear so far in the right that not a single country could protest with a shadow of reason. His jaws came together with an ominous click as he followed the page into the President's private offices, determined to make the fight of his life. The moment for which he had waited so many years had at last apparently arrived, and he meant to use it to the full.

"Good evening, Mr. President. I dropped in to see you for a moment about that immigration affair."

"Yes?" the big man in the swivel chair inquired without interest. "What is it that troubles you, Mr. Arnold?" His flabby, too fleshy face and body rippled over the edges of his clothes, and his pudgy hands played with a paper cutter as he regarded the documents before him abstractedly, now and then running stubby fingers through the thin gray hair above his large ears.

"I presume you have read my speech," continued Arnold imperturbably. "You know just as well as I do that this offers a tremendous chance for you, sir. Here we have practically the entire nation up in arms against these worthless foreigners, howling for some action on your part to stop their coming in any longer. You read the papers. You know what the yellow journals are saying; how they are agitating the people . . . What will you do about it?"

President Burgess opened his weak blue eyes wide, moistened his lips, jabbed the paper cutter into his leg once or twice. He knew Colonel Arnold's reputation of an eye for an eye—or when he could get them, two for one. His own eyes narrowed to mere slits as he searched vainly for his caller's hidden meaning, endeavoring to see through that immutable mask of a face that discovered nothing when bent on mischief. Thrusting a cigar between his teeth for a dry smoke and turning abruptly on the Westerner, he asked with astonishing directness for a practiced diplomat: "Will you show

your hand freely, Senator? I can judge better when I know what you have in mind."

Colonel Arnold smiled faintly, and the President thought of a wolf at bay. "Certainly, sir. I am no diplomat like yourself," caviled the wily politician, "but a blunt old miner. I always say what I mean. This is it. You wish to be reelected next year. Don't you see what a strong card it will be in your suit if you put an immediate stop to this immigration from Almerania? It will pull votes for you."

"It is easy to talk of stopping it," objected Burgess heavily. "But what can we do until the amendment is passed?"

"Stop it anyway! Notify Almerania that two weeks after the day you send your ultimatum to Morisca, emigration to the United States must stop."

The President gasped. This was an extreme measure. "We can't do it. It is not constitutional."

"What difference does that make? Are we so hidebound that when it comes to a question of saving the country from these desperadoes we have to sit still and wait for weeks or months until we can act in accordance with antiquated documents never intended to fit the present age and circumstances? Of course you can do it!"

"How?"

"Exactly as I said a moment ago. Just tell the Foreign Office that it has to stop. Our gates are no longer open. They are shut, and a whole regiment of troops is stationed at Governor's Island to turn back the immigrants if the steamship companies attempt any more trickery."

"I don't see how that would do any good. Almerania would appeal to the Powers, and we should have to back down. How would it help me in case I should—as is most unlikely—wish a second nomination?"

Arnold's eyes flashed as he saw his opportunity. He leaned forward. "I'll tell you, sir. The country would hail you as its saviour. It would vote solidly for the man who had the cour-

age, the high spirit, the keen foresight to step into the breach and at the risk of impeachment put a stop to the greatest evil that ever menaced the country since the saloons were swept away. You would go into office on an avalanche of popularity. As for Almerania protesting to the Powers: what good would that do her? Is there a single nation in Christendom that wouldn't do an even more arbitrary thing than that for the sake of saving its national life? Oh, no, Mr. President; you have the chance of a century to serve both the country and yourself. Take advantage of it."

President Burgess hesitated. The bait was tempting indeed, and the chance did look very much as Arnold had presented it. The matter was a difficult one, though, and he must test both sides carefully before deciding. To make a mistake would fatally prejudice his chances at the convention soon to come. "I see all you see, but I see also that it might very easily lead to war. Smaller things than this have precipitated some of the most disastrous and bloodiest wars in history."

"What of it, sir? We are ready. We have been fully prepared ever since the big Japanese scare of ten years ago. And remember," he added subtly, in a low tone, "that we shall have taken an impregnable position. We shall be standing firmly upon what are not merely our legal rights as a sovereign power, but also upon absolute justice and righteousness. We shall have placed ourselves in the position of a patient and long-suffering nation which has decided to be cajoled and befooled no longer. By adroit handling of the question we will place Almerania entirely in the wrong. Then let her declare war against us if she chooses! Let her strike the first blow. Do you get my meaning?"

Slowly the President nodded, but made no reply. It was so typically an Arnold plan, so absolutely cold-blooded and heartless, that he faltered before the grisly apparition.

"Another thing," resumed Arnold hastily. "I doubt it will come to

blows, but if it should, it would be a very popular war and quickly over."

"Possibly, but think of the suffering and the terrific cost."

"Not at all, sir. I have studied the matter all this fall, and I am convinced that the war could be fought out almost entirely at sea and on foreign soil. Almerania is no match for us, and as for the cost, that can be taken care of by demanding such an indemnity for the territory we capture that it will practically pay all the expenses of the fighting."

"You have a wonderful mind, Senator," was the President's only comment. "Now tell me something else. Suppose matters should so occur that these things you have hinted at actually came to pass. What would you want of me? What will I have to pay?—for I know you want something, and would expect to carry this matter in the Senate so that your somewhat rose-colored prophecies could really eventuate."

Again Arnold smiled. He had not anticipated so easy a victory. "Of course, I can carry the burden of it. I can call attention to your fearless statesmanship and broad policy at a time when smaller men would have shrunk back from what might have seemed disaster, and set you before the country as the greatest man since Washington. For myself, I want two things. In the first place, we need irrigation desperately in my State. Wyoming is as dry as a bone in most parts. I want an appropriation suggested in your next message, a committee appointed with myself as its chairman, the preference given my State above all others, and then when that work is well started, I might possibly accept the portfolio of Agriculture."

"You are frank, and I thank you," replied the President.

"Think it over, Mr. President. Send for me tomorrow," Arnold rejoined, rising to go. "I did not suppose you could see things as I do at first."

It was in rare good humor that he crunched his way rapidly down the path to the Avenue, and started upon

his interrupted walk. Victory seemed almost within his grasp. Quickly his plans shaped themselves a year ahead. Already he controlled the political bosses of five States besides his own and they held the Mormon vote solidly to heel. He was popular throughout the West, and when the moment came one of his henchmen would find it easy to annihilate Burgess's chances by rising to proclaim that the President would never have dared do anything of himself. That it was Arnold who had really saved the country, carried through all the preliminaries of a brilliant and successful war, and finally had confessed himself as very reluctant to accept the nomination for the Presidency. Other speeches by other partisans would follow in rapid succession, the nomination would be rushed through despite the frantic efforts of the Burgess retainers, and Anthony Burgess would never dare confess that Arnold had deceived him or broken anything more than that exceedingly tenuous political faith which ruptures at the slightest cause.

"Uxt'y! Uxt'—awh! Uxt'—uxt'—uxt'—! All about the big riot!" interrupted a newsboy, thrusting a special edition of the afternoon papers under the startled Senator's nose. "Turr'ble slaughter! Sixty killed! Uxt'! Fi cents, boss! Uxt'! Uxt'—awh!"

Off like a shot rushed the lad with the terrible voice, and Arnold stood beneath a street lamp's glare to read the telegram. Printed in flaring red letters in the two upper right hand columns, only four lines deep, it was enough, and he whistled.

RIOTING IN MISSOURI

SEDALIA, MO., MONDAY.—Sixty Almeranians were killed and fourteen Americans badly wounded in a race riot today. About two hundred men were in the fight. The Almeranians fled and took some of their wounded with them. Posses are out now hunting them down. Sedalia is in a fever of excitement, and the men will be given short shrift if caught.

Folding up the paper, Colonel Arnold swung quickly on his heel and started back to the White House. "Things seem to be coming my way," he muttered grimly. "Here's cause enough for action!"

Chapter Three

The Advancing Tide

ALL day after the news of the riot the telegraph room of the Capitol buzzed and clicked with the burden of the overworked wires, and Senator Arnold—after hours of argument—left the Executive offices with a peculiar smile on his stern face. Not a word would he say, but somehow the news filtered out, and at the breakfast table the nation held its breath—immigration of the Almeranians was stopped. Two weeks, to permit those already embarked to enter, was conceded; then Almerania must await such changes in the Constitution as might be adopted.

With the crafty Senator from Wyoming a feeling of sleek satisfaction obtained, though he was compelled by circumstances to conceal his elation. All his efforts must now be directed visibly toward an innocent appearance of playing directly into the hands of the strong peace element. He must seem to second all their motions, to aid them with all his might in doing everything possible to avoid a formal clash with Almerania. The part was one of no small difficulty, for President Burgess being naturally suspicious of him, a single misstep would ruin carefully laid plans. Sedulously he schooled himself to his task, for that evening especially one of difficulty, since he and Edith were to dine formally with the Mowbrays. The dinner was to welcome her back to the city, and Lieutenant Cuthbert was to be present also, Senator Arnold remembered, as he dressed after a tumultuous day of debate in the Senate, so he must be particularly careful to give the shrewd young officer no inkling of his purpose or ideas.

Edith was not without some misgivings, and it was with considerable relief that she noted her father's hearty hand-grasp and cheery "How are you, Mowbray?" as they entered the Massachusetts senator's house. Leader of the ultra-conservatives of that august body, Rufus Mowbray stood for all that represented the welfare of the nation as

he saw it. His enormous head, with its bald crown and mild, colorless eyes behind magnifying spectacles; his heavy face and gentle expression, made genial and somewhat droll by the double chin and absence of any hirsute adornment; his short, stout body and long arms—all tended to create the impression of fully as vast a store of surplus power and energy as was contained in the thin, nervous body and fierce expression of the determined old miner from Wyoming.

"Now, Arnold," Senator Mowbray interrupted as the dinner was announced in the midst of a lively conversation about the matinee the two girls had attended that afternoon, "you take Mrs. Mowbray in. Miss Edith, will you honor me?" He offered his long arm.

The dinner moved easily along, far more so than either Edith or her father had dared anticipate in such circumstances, and the urbane host kept up a steady fire of little gallantries and small talk with the young people that left no opportunity for any serious subject to obtrude itself. But at last, through someone's inadvertent remark, the conversation turned upon war, and instantly the vivacious society chatter and banter gave way before the absorbing topic.

"This war talk is all premature," interposed Senator Mowbray in a momentary lull in the conversation, addressing no one in particular but pointing his remark at Arnold, "and I agree with Miss Edith that we are doing the people at large a great wrong by holding on to such an idea."

"Why, Rufus," observed his wife placidly, "we cannot change the order of things. If war comes, it will be because the Providence that watches over us desires it."

"I—" began Arnold, but Leila Mowbray, not noticing him, cut in excitedly, "I think it would be fine to have a war. We have never been defeated yet. Think of the glory of it! What do you say, Lieutenant Cuthbert—wouldn't you like to see it?"

The naval officer's eyes gleamed in

spite of his equivocal reply. "It would give us a lot of practical experience."

"Yes, but wouldn't you love to serve your country, and," Leila continued, catching her father's monitory glance, "and, really earn your salary?"

To save him the embarrassment of answering, Edith exclaimed: "Leila! Just think of the awfulness of it; the suffering and agony. The idea is horrible."

"There always have been wars and I suppose there always will be, Senator, won't there?" inquired Mrs. Mowbray of Arnold.

"I think so. And I can agree with you all," he replied smoothly, with an ingratiating smile. "Edith is depressed because she can see only one side of it. Your husband there is a strenuous promoter of peace, and I side with him so long as it is possible, and consistent with our national honor. Miss Leila is right in that glory does come from war, and a conflict at this particular time would undoubtedly be exceedingly popular with the unthinking masses who fail to realize what war means. They would be the ones to do the most fighting; they would bear the brunt of the suffering, yet they seem to want it. It would give both arms of the service a great opportunity to show what they could do. But I am for peace. I stirred up this question because I believe a remedy is needed and can be found. I know personally what war really means, and I should be sorry to see the country plunge unready into a war with any power, no matter how small or unprepared."

Senator Mowbray shot a searching glance at this unsuspected advocate of peace, and his wife calmly radiated satisfaction, feeling that her estimate of this forceful Westerner had been right after all. But no one else was deceived, and Edith bit her lip as she saw the reception of her father's profession of pacific intentions.

"I have always hated war," she remarked quietly. "Even when I was a little girl and read the dreadful stories about the Civil War, it seemed to me a crime."

Cuthbert leaned forward, completely forgetting the dashing Leila, whose snapping, steely blue eyes and black hair and snub nose gave her warm color and bright expression a piquant vivacity Edith lacked. "But would you say a man ought not to fight?" he demanded apprehensively.

She turned her glorious soft gray eyes full upon him and answered spiritedly: "Not at all. I despise a coward. No friend of mine has ever proved one. If a man spends his whole life training for that very thing, I think it would amount to cowardice if he resigned in the face of a possible war. He ought to fight, and die if necessary. But he ought never to have been engaged in such business."

The lieutenant leaned back in his chair with evident relief. "Thank God she's no coward anyway!" he thought, blind to the comprehension and jealousy that for an instant disfigured the handsome face beside him. But Edith had not finished.

"What do you think, Senator Mowbray?" she asked, as they rose from the table. "Am I right or wrong?"

The kindly eyes blinked at her through the gold-rimmed spectacles, and the big face laughed gently as he patted her on the shoulder with an almost paternal fondness that went straight to Arnold's heart. "Why, I think this is a bad time to talk politics. In one way you are right; and perhaps a little wrong, too."

"But can't you give a definite opinion, father?" pleaded Leila.

"No, no; not now. I'm afraid we have spoiled our dinner by talking so seriously already. If you girls want to hear what I really think, come over to the Senate tomorrow about three o'clock. I shall have something to say then. Now let's have some music."

Lieutenant Cuthbert arranged the sheets for Edith on the piano, and as she played she made up her mind to hear the speech, arranging with Leila to call for her with the lieutenant as they separated for the evening. The hours flew fast, and before Edith fairly realized it she was sitting in the Senate gallery looking down at the floor, her eyes

fixed upon the slowly rising form of Senator Mowbray as he arranged his notes on the desk before him, smoothed back his thin hair with a nervous hand—for he disliked speaking before visitors intensely—and began his effort for peace.

"I shall not speak long," he said, in a rich baritone that thrilled clear and satisfying to the farthest corner of the galleries, "but I wish to recall to your memories the ancient Hebrew prophet's warning to his people that their day of judgment was at hand. Today we, too, are in the valley of decision, with the world as our relentless judge. Can we fail before that pitiless tribunal?"

"Our day is at hand," he repeated, raising his voice as he forgot his audience and warmed to his subject. "We must decide this issue raised a few days ago so forcibly by the gentleman from another State. We cannot afford to be anything but right, right in our own eyes, in the eyes of the world of Christian nations, right in the eyes of a higher Power than any represented by the arms of man or the hounds of war. Right we must be, not for our own sakes alone—we are creatures of a moment only—but for the sake of posterity. Our children must not be shamed by their fathers. For our contemporaries I care little. Like ourselves, they cannot live forever. But for the unborn generations of noble men and women who shall make America pulsate with these unrivaled qualities which have so far been our strength in time of trouble, we must be right.

"We have had foolish talk in this honorable body. We have listened to many a silly prophecy, many an idle and ill-considered word. We are not jingoes, not rampant and excitable, like our Latin neighbors across the water. This talk is all premature, all for political effect. But it has impressed the people, whose minds are as wax to retain the scratching of circumstance. Let us be calm. Let us suspend haste and be reasonable. We cannot afford to forget that a nation which governs itself in equity is greater than one victorious in war.

"We have sent a peremptory note to a friendly power, simply because we are irritated, frightened out of our wits by the hobgoblin of imaginary terrors. We can maintain order if we will. Are we to stand before the world self-confessedly unable to rule ourselves because a mere handful of aliens have created serious disorders?"

"The gentleman from Massachusetts mistakes," suddenly roared Arnold, springing to his feet with blazing eyes. "He does not tell you we shall have civil war if this goes on! Do not be misled. Remember the facts!"

With a crash the president's gavel fell, but as Arnold sat down he shouted defiantly: "I know he has the floor, but we want facts, not bunkum!"

"The gentleman from Wyoming seems to need a sedative," suggested Mowbray gravely. "Can too much hard work have upset his nerves? He is a busy man, yet sometimes I think of Chaucer's 'Sergeant':

"Nowhere so busie a man as hee ther nas,
And yet he seeméd busier than hee really
was!"

In the roar of laughter that surged up from the applauding senators, most of whom feared the wily Arnold, Edith covered her face with her hands, and Leila saved herself from clapping only by a sudden breathless effort, giving the uncomfortable Cuthbert a glance that still further increased his confusion.

"I repeat, gentlemen," resumed Mowbray, when some measure of quiet had been restored, "that these aliens are a mere handful compared to our own citizens. We can govern them if we will. But let that pass for the moment. We have sent Almerania a peremptory note ordering her to send us no more of her working people. Will she rest quiet under so unwarranted a procedure? Will her friendliness increase toward us? It is scarcely likely. Consider her predicament and we shall see why.

"Almerania produces more people than she does food supply. The mouths she cannot feed have to go somewhere. America is almost the only country offering really first-class prospects.

The Almeranians, accordingly, come here. Too many have come for our comfort. But we can arrange this matter without hurting the feelings of a sensitive nation, without any useless nervous strain, without any idle talk of hostilities. The matter is so simple I am astonished that none of the gentlemen who have spoken on this subject have thought of it.

"Instead of abruptly ordering Almerania to stop emigration, we could have said, and still can say, if we are minded aright, that she should restrict it. Let her take the minimum number, who come here from Sweden, let us say for example, and send only so many of her own subjects. In the meantime we can assail the Constitution, and do more or less damage at our leisure in the way of pulling our own bulwarks to pieces. That will take time. The prior claims of other pressing national business make it impossible for immigration problems and the amendment to be definitely settled within less than three months.

"During the three months indicated, Almerania can send in a small number and when we have finally decided what we wish to do with the Constitution, she can lay the matter before the Hague Tribunal if she is dissatisfied.

"Some forgotten politician about ten or fifteen years ago coined the phrase 'Big Stick.' It is a most expressive term. But if we attempt to employ the 'Big Stick' today may we not find possibly that some other nation has a still bigger one? We are not exactly in the millennium perhaps, but we are close to it. Arbitration can settle every difficulty if we give it a chance. And what is the Hague Tribunal for if we are not to use it?"

He stopped to consult his memoranda again, and a faint ripple of applause stirred among the more conservative of the lawmakers.

"We have been told," Mowbray began again, with deliberate emphasis, "told by all the more sensational press, and by many others, that we shall have war. I do not believe it is a possibility, gentlemen. But were I inclined to jest

upon so dreadful a subject, I would suggest that to spare ourselves much of the cost, most of the horror and bloodshed, all of the agony the common people must suffer in a regular conflict, that we let the politicians of the respective countries fight it out in a series of international duels. Brave army of noble defenders!" he thundered in biting sarcasm. "Noble sons of the country laying their heroic lives upon their country's altar freely!"

Tumultuous laughter interrupted him, and the voice of Arnold could be heard faintly through the din in an inarticulate bellow of rage. But Mowbray exerted the full power of his great chest and shouted above it all: "Think of how many thousands of self-sacrificing defenders we should have; of the awful carnage; the feats of valor—the buckets of blood!"

The Senate was convulsed, the president's gavel banged splinters from his desk, and Arnold was on his feet shouting something no one could hear. Such pandemonium had not been witnessed in years, and only Mowbray, standing calmly waiting for quiet, was cool and collected. In the gallery Edith could endure it no longer, for even Cuthbert, though mindful of his delicate position, had been carried away by his sense of humor and laughed outright as he pictured the politicians standing in rows and shooting in the air.

"Will you take me home, please?" she asked him swiftly, her face white and quivering.

Chapter Four

The Sowing of the Wind

DESPITE Senator Mowbray's masterly plea, President Burgess's note remained unchanged, and as the feeling in both the United States and Almerania grew tenser and fiercer every day, Lieutenant Cuthbert found the situation most difficult. The frantic preparations and clamor on every side stirred him like old wine. Yet when-

ever Edith came into his mind, he was filled with an uneasy sense of being hesitant.

But the moment of his indecision could not be long protracted. Twenty-four hours before the time limit of the two weeks expired, the country was placarded with the news that all diplomatic relations with Almerania had been severed, and the prognostication that she, knowing perfectly our one weak point, would probably strike first.

Raymond sprang from his chair in the Service Club when the tidings came. The China Squadron, coaling at Port Said—that must be it—only a few ships foul with long service, against a whole home fleet! Could he do anything? He glanced around the room—his fellow officers were taking it more calmly; so must he. Wiser heads than his were looking after things. Soon the wireless brought the one word everybody waited to hear, and his anxiety redoubled. What was his duty—to stay at his post ashore or to volunteer? He longed to ask Edith—he did not dare.

Two more days he waited, haunting the Department's bulletin boards vainly at every spare moment. No news had come, apparently. But the enterprising newspapers had hired celebrated foreign correspondents and sent them out in vessels under neutral flags to spy out and report the proceedings by wireless, and at last the clicking sounder announced that the Almeranian fleet had been sighted hovering about off Alexandria, swift scout cruisers dashing on ahead to learn the exact whereabouts of the slower American vessels, by this time a good hundred leagues away in the midst of the following storm that had prevented the watchful Almeranians from seeing them as they sped by in the night, lightless and menacing.

"It is the first time in history that an American fleet as a fleet has had to run," telegraphed the Frenchman in charge of the press boat, "but they have done it so successfully that the Latins seem completely baffled, and are now steaming furiously northwestward, evidently to guard their own coast from sudden attack."

Thoroughly awakened by the despatch, Cuthbert sought out the Secretary of the Navy at once, pleading to be given a destroyer and permission to join the battleships from St. Thomas in the West Indies, already despatched to assist the weaker squadron in the Mediterranean. Taking up one of the many documents piled neatly before him, the great man pushed it silently across the table, and Raymond read with glowing eyes:

NAVYSTAFF, WASHINGTON:

We are off Cádiz now, steaming fourteen knots. Bottoms very foul and colliers unable to hold pace. Leaving them behind. Reach Porto Ercole tonight and at dawn begin boat attack. Captains Rice, Snow, Wallace and Ferguson will command in four divisions as suggested, with all boats, launches towing if no wind. Think can land about twenty-eight hundred and still man larger guns and cover landing party. Weather very thick at eight bells, strong beam sea running, wind half gale from south-southwest. Will report when attack begins.

MORDAUNT, REAR-ADMIRAL.

"Great!" ejaculated Cuthbert as he finished the despatch. "I'd give a leg to be there!"

"I'm afraid you would not be of much use with only one leg," remarked his superior soberly. "And why do you wish to risk your life and the country's property by taking out a destroyer alone? Don't you see that you might be intercepted and sunk before you could accomplish anything?"

"I'd take a few others along with me, anyway," rejoined Cuthbert grimly. "It is my only chance, sir," he begged, almost in tears. "Let me have the *Lawrence*. I know she's considered unlucky, but let me have her. If she goes down, everybody will say it's a good riddance to a bad ship. If not, I may be able to do something. I know I will. Let me go sir. The fighting will all be over before I get a chance if you don't!"

Running his finger through a tabulated list of accidents, the Secretary pondered the record of the gallant *Lawrence's* unfortunate namesake. At last he shut the book with a sigh and looked up at the young officer. "I had planned to dismantle the old tub after

her last exploit. I don't know why I didn't. She's in bad condition and not fit to go out on any such risky mission as this."

"Let me have her anyway, sir. I can get a crew in fifteen minutes at the League Island Yard. The men will come with me, even on the *Lawrence*. What are my orders, sir?"

He stood very straight beside the desk, confident and prepossessing, and the old civilian Secretary felt his heart reproach him at letting such a foolhardy youth go to his death. Yet perhaps he might be able to disembowel some leviathan of the enemy, and if the uncertain *Lawrence* in her dying flurry could do that, the lives of her commander and his ninety men would have been well thrown in the balances of war.

"My boy, I feel almost as if my own son were going when I think of sending you. I don't want to do it," objected the Secretary. "Can't you be content here? We can't spare a single officer of your caliber—"

"On shore," prompted Cuthbert, brightening. "All the best men ought to be at sea in command at a moment like this. My orders are . . ."

"Take her then, and God bless you. Join the fleet as quickly as you can, take no chances, and report to Admiral Mordaunt as soon as you get within wireless range. He may have some special service for you. Good-bye . . ."

The Secretary's promise opened a vista so pregnant with the chance of distinction and even glory that the excited officer could scarcely restrain his enthusiasm as he hastily uttered his thanks and dashed from the gloomy War and Navy Building. Hailing an idling cab, he drove eagerly out to Senator Arnold's house—Edith must know of his wonderful luck at once! Who could tell what might not offer in the breadth of the Atlantic to an independent command such as his, bound by no orders or official red tape, responsible to no one, and with only a single object? His eyes flashed to think of it. She would say—what would she say? How would she take his news,

feeling as she did about war? He had won his first important victory in getting his command. Now an even greater battle confronted him, for without this exquisite gentle girl of the cool gray eyes and nimbus of glorious chestnut hair, who lived in his dreams day and night as a sort of human incarnation of his beloved ocean, glory itself paled into extinction. He strove to frame his little speech, to build up a consecutive appeal that should move her, but before he touched the verge of success the cab stopped, and he entered the Senator's drawing-room recklessly, without an idea, determined to meet his fate with the inspiration of the moment.

"I have news for you—great news!" he announced proudly as Edith gave him her hand. "I am going to sea tomorrow evening in command of a destroyer."

"In a destroyer! Alone!" faltered the girl, realizing to some extent the hazardous nature of his mission.

With the instinct of uncertainty he watched her expressions change. "Yes—alone. I'm going to catch the Atlantic Squadron if I can. It has two days' start, but I'll make the old tub get there or blow her up. She isn't much of a ship," he added apologetically, "and I can't expect to do many wonders with her, but I'll do all I know. It'll go hard with her if I don't get her across in time for action!"

Edith sat down suddenly on the divan, horrified by his careless desire to destroy. That this mild young giant should actually long to thrust himself and his men into the most dangerous situation possible appalled her, and Cuthbert was not slow to see her agitation. He took his seat near her.

"Won't you wish me luck, Miss Arnold?" he began timidly. "A fellow fights a lot better for knowing somebody cares."

"How can I?" she objected hysterically. "If I wish you luck, it means death and destruction for others. You may lose your men and your ship, and—"

"And what?" he prompted gently.

She shook her head. "Oh, why must you? Could you not be content to stay ashore until you were ordered out? I feel sure you must have asked for this. No official would be so heartless at the beginning of a war as to send you to almost certain death or capture!"

"Of course I asked for it!" he returned in astonishment. "Do you suppose anybody would send a craft like the *Lawrence* to sea of his own free will?"

She gave a cry of dismay. "The *Lawrence*? Isn't she the 'hoodoo' ship you are always talking about? The one always breaking down or running into something or blowing up?"

"Surely; but there wasn't any other I could get. You wouldn't have me stay at home just because a ship has been unlucky, would you?"

"I don't want you to go at all! It isn't necessary."

"Edith, dear," he exclaimed passionately, drawing both her hands into his warm clasp, "you do care then? I love you. I want you. I need you, sweetheart. I love you better than anything in the world. Better than—"

"Ah, no," she protested vehemently, but letting her hands remain in his. "You love your service better than you do me!"

"Never! But I must consider my honor. I could not back out now. You would not want me to. You said the other night that a man in the service ought to fight, and I'm going to. I shall fight better because I love you. I can do more if you tell me you love me. Do you? I don't ask much. I don't suppose a big, clumsy fellow like me has any right to expect a beautiful woman to think very much of him. But let me try to teach you to love me a little. Be my wife. I can wait. It will grow by and by. Tell me, dearest."

Her self-control was giving way under his pleading, and the sudden vision of his frail craft plunging like a sea-monster through the foaming surge, half hidden in her own spray, and the target for a thousand flying shells,

brought the tears to her eyes with a rush he could not bear.

"Dear," he exulted, enfolding her in his powerful arms, "I know you love me. Send me to sea happy. Tell me!"

"Oh, I do love you! I do! Can't you see it?" she sobbed, shaken with happiness and terror.

"Then marry me now—before I go!" His voice was masterful. "My beloved . . ."

Their lips met, and he brushed away her tears tenderly as he poured a torrent of ardent protestations into her eager ears, almost beside himself with his amazing good fortune.

"No, Raymond," she replied, when they had grown calmer, "I can't marry you now. Think of the misery I should endure, wondering where you were, what you were doing, whether you were in danger thousands of miles away perhaps, where I could not help you. Think of my loneliness, how I should long for you every day and every hour, and you could not come to me. No, it is impossible."

It brought home to him vividly one phase of warfare he had never considered before. She was right, too, he knew, and that made it all the harder to bear. But she was speaking again, and he heard her as in a blurred dream.

"I will not marry a man who is to leave me a widow half the time, and always dreading a possible war. If this senseless and wicked conflict is ever finished, and you are still alive, I will listen to you then. But you must resign. You can do anything you like and I will go anywhere on earth with you. But I will never leave you! I cannot, I simply cannot marry you unless you give up the service!"

He stood dumb, chilled for a moment by the fate before him. He thought of the wild freedom of the sea, the steady heave of the deck beneath his restless feet, the clean, pure air and the sense of largeness in life. Then the beautiful gray-eyed girl before him slowly loomed like a mist over the sea and obscured it. His decision was taken.

"I'll do it, dearest," he faltered huskily, his voice shaken with the

effort. "I'll resign the minute the war's over."

Seeing his sacrifice and appreciating it she nerved herself to the ordeal of parting. She had won her great point, and her father's indomitable strength thrilled through her—she would not tear the heart dependent upon her by betraying her own agony. She must help Raymond do his duty as he saw it.

The parting was over before he knew it and he stood upon the sidewalk looking back dazed at the huge blind house that stared at him unseeingly. He had reached his goal by supreme self-surrender; he had won his heart's desire—and lost his calling.

Chapter Five

The Gathering Storm

CUTHBERT's telegram was briefness itself, yet its very curttness intensified Edith's keen perception of the meaning of war to women:

Leaving tonight. Newspapers ignorant. Say nothing.

RAYMOND.

It was her first message from him that meant anything more than friendliness, and the shock it gave her was strengthened by the knowledge that besides being the first, it might well also be the last. She folded the yellow slip carefully away and clung to her father for sympathy. It cut him to the quick to see her dry-eyed, silent, suffering, and roughly he attempted to cheer her up with the vague prophecy of a speedy termination of hostilities, probably before Cuthbert could reach his destination. But Edith's intuition forecast disaster and Arnold, with a man's impatient inability to see why a woman should worry herself so, ahead of time, hurried away to bury himself in his duties at the Capitol.

His daughter, however, had no such relief. Her household duties were slight and the fact that her aunt had been unexpectedly called back to Barnstable

by the illness of a relative, gave her no very great amount of extra care.

As she moved about the house or sat idle at times gazing heedlessly from a window on the sunny Avenue, the one recurrent, resilient thought that kept her in a steady turmoil was the effervescent sense of wonder as to Raymond's whereabouts. Was he in calm weather and making the destroyer tear through the water at top speed? Was he in a storm, beaten by the growing seas, staggering through mountainous waves whose icy green froze wherever it touched the paper-thin hull of the little vessel and had frequently to be chopped away to save her from foundering in the December blast? Was the unlucky craft herself doomed to break down or strike a derelict or rack herself apart with her usual perversity, and carry him to the bottom? She saw "The Tempest" before her, heard Ariel announcing to her lightly in the words of the play:

Full fathom five lies,
Of his bones are coral made.

Must she suffer like this all through the war? Where was her former bravery, when she considered it right for him to go because it would be cowardly to resign in the face of trouble? But he had not belonged to her then, nor she to him. She could not understand the frivolous chatter of the army and navy wives and daughters who saw only glory and promotion, who feared nothing that war might bring to pass. Oh, it was wicked, wicked, that any woman could feel so about the slaughter of her own kind!

The great house was lonely and forbidding, but the solitary girl dreaded the approaching visit she must make in the frivolous Patterson household in New York, for the two girls, she knew, would clamor over her good fortune in having friends in the war, and stab cruelly with their innocent queries about glory and danger and promotion and all the rest. The sympathetic invitation of the Mowbrays for Christmas dinner seemed scarcely less formidable a trial and she begged her father not to insist on her going out.

"Nonsense, child—it will do you good. You're altogether too much alone," insisted the Colonel fondly. "Get your mind away from these silly, gloomy thoughts. You need to get out. Most certainly we'll go to Mowbray's. And day after tomorrow I'll pack you off to New York myself."

"I'd rather wait," she objected. "How can I enjoy opera and theaters and dances when I'm thinking all the time about war?"

"But you won't," her father smiled craftily. "You'll very soon find a thing or two beside war to occupy you. When the Patterson girls get you in hand, you will be as lively as a chipmunk again in a day or two. Oh, I know, my dear; I know."

Had he been left to his own devices, Senator Arnold would have worked all through Christmas Day just as he did every other part of the week, but the habit which he had formed of going to church on that morning with his wife had been rigidly adhered to for Edith's sake, and the unchurchly politician had rather grown to look forward to it as a sort of celebration which was the more pleasantly stimulating by its rarity, and the genial disregard he felt for the men who could do nothing better than preach timeworn platitudes.

The Avenue was crowded, and father and daughter chose to walk briskly in the nipping air among the jovial crowds in preference to taking the carriage. The city rested quietly in the almost Sabbath stillness, which was broken only by the clatter of the trolley cars in the distance and the chime of the church bells, when around the corner came a pair of rushing newsboys, yelling hoarsely and flourishing red-splashed extras of the morning newspapers. Edith seized her father's arm convulsively. Had the *Lawrence* gone down? was her instant thought.

"Brace up, child," the old man snapped, himself anxious. "Don't get scared until we see what has happened. It's probably a fake. Here, boy; give me a paper!"

Shuddering, she turned away and tried to look natural as they stood still,

her father scanning the blotchy lines with hurried eyes. She felt him sigh sharply, then laugh, and turned back to him eagerly.

"It's all right," he cried exultantly. "Score the first victory for Uncle Sam! I told you so."

"What is it?" she faltered. "Has there been a battle?"

He laughed at her. "Yes, but Cuthbert wasn't there! Cheer up! Admiral Mordaunt has captured the Island of Lercara for us! Twenty-eight hundred men landed from the China Squadron, got on shore without firing a shot, marched six miles inland to the fortified town of Fossetta, and took it with almost no resistance. The despatch says only nine of our men were wounded. This is great news for Christmas Day!"

He crushed the paper into his pocket and they went on toward the church, his jovial pride at this sudden achievement in the enemy's country falling hollow and false upon her ears. She could not see the ensigns snapping in the breeze, nor hear the victorious shrilling of the bugles. Instead, there spread before her a rocky hillside strewn with the bodies of groaning men who perhaps had no friends, men of no importance in the world, men whose hurts would be lumped under the ungenerous caption of "so many wounded." How long would they lie there and suffer before the fight ended and the surgeons could come to their assistance? How many of the wretched Almeranians, forced into a service they hated and fled their country to escape, had been struck down by the purring bullets? She shook herself and tried to force the sight from her mind as they entered the edifice to the silvery chimes of

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!

Melodiously the great organ took up the splendid theme, and as the service progressed, and the sermon set forth again the tranquilizing message of the day, Edith grew calmer, forgetting momentarily the outer world in the dim,

sacred atmosphere of the well-filled church.

But the clergyman had heard the news, and she awoke with dismay as the white-haired divine launched into a glowing extemporaneous eulogy of our small victory. Ignoring the advent of "peace on earth," which had absorbed him and his people a moment before, he thundered at the gates of their minds, demanding admission forthought anything but peaceful and inspiring. And with his ardor of patriotism, he contrived to infuse into his unprepared conclusion some show of authority for the prosecution of the conflict, citing many a biblical exhortation to destruction of the enemy.

Timidly Edith glanced about her during the impetuous harangue. Beside her in rigid attention her father listened, his fierce old visage glowing, his lean body erect. Every face in the great assemblage but hers was set in stern, satisfied approval, every eye fixed on the speaker as he poured forth the unintentionally hypocritical appeal to their passions. She was aghast at this desecration of the building, this sacrilegious twisting of the Christmas story into a pæan of political self-glorification. But the minister continued:

"It is peculiarly significant that this glorious news of recent victory should come to us on the natal day of the Prince of Peace. Does not this herald peace? Does it not augur the speedy restoration of good will among men?" he inquired vehemently.

The peroration was bad enough, with the heads of the most dignified all over the church nodding approval, but the short prayer following was even worse to the sensitive soul of the cowering girl, who shrank into herself at the appeal for greater strength in battle and a full measure of success and glory for our militant arms. Was not the enemy praying too?

As the congregation rustled back in their seats with a satisfied air, Edith experienced a fresh shock, for from the pulpit came the startling announcement: "Let us sing 'The Star Spangled

Banner.' The soprano will sing each verse as a solo, and the congregation will rise and join in the chorus. Let us all sing with all our hearts!"

Too much astonished to do anything more than mechanical at first, she rose submissively with the others during the prelude to the vivid anthem. But as the soloist raised the thrilling words of the song high and clear, she could scarcely repress a desire to shriek. The very organ peals seemed to vibrate with the taint and stir of the primeval blood-lust of the war sentiment. Why, on this natal day of the world's gentlest, most loving, most beneficent Prophet, must the bursting shell and the flag of defiance float even in this holy place? Her lips were silent, but her heart cried out "for those in peril on the sea."

Her father sang—sang with the fervor of a fighting gladiator. The notes meant nothing to him, and he could not carry the air, but he sang with all the power of his tremendous voice, out of time, out of tune, ferociously, gladly, careless of his lagging discords and pleased beyond reason with himself and the clergyman. He was glad he had come to church, and did not notice that she shrank away from even him a little as she passed silently from the edifice, filled with horror at the war, disgust at the blatant anthem on such a day and in such a place, and concern that her own pastor should be so carried away in the popular unmoral attitude of approval.

But such feelings could not last at the cheerful Mowbray house, which glowed with the merriment of a gay party. It was the annual "dinner to the homeless and friendless," as Leila had dubbed the Christmas feast that they gave every year, inviting the diplomats and officers and civil officials who had no homes in Washington and whose families or friends were too far distant to permit of a visit. The big table glittered with the sparkle of the cut glass and plate, and shone with the luster of snowy napery and delicate china. Upon it smoked the old-fashioned New England Christmas dinner with a most appetizing invitation as Senator Mow-

bray laboriously carved the turkey and urged his laughing guests to impossible gastronomic feats with hearty cordiality and utter disregard for the next day's remorse. At last the protracted meal was finished, the chairs pushed back, and Mrs. Mowbray led the way into the drawing-room.

Scarcely had they entered when a message was handed to the young Assistant Secretary of the Navy who, after hastily glancing through it, begged to be excused and rushed away. The gay banter ceased instantly, and Leila, surrounded by an admiring knot of men, asked in mock anxiety if it meant another victory. Before anyone could reply, the shouting of newsboys outside came to their ears, and she clapped her hands.

"That must be it. Somebody get me a paper, please!"

Three sprang to do her bidding, and the successful gallant returned in a moment with the extra, but there was no gaiety in his face as he silently handed the journal to his interested host.

Hastily adjusting his spectacles, Senator Mowbray started as he read the opening lines of the news just gathered from the Secretary of the Navy, and passing the sheet to Arnold, he commanded: "Read it to them, Arnold; I can't!"

Raising his voice to conceal its excitement, Senator Arnold began to read aloud, while they listened, breathless:

Wireless telegrams just received by the Secretary of the Navy from Admiral Mordaunt this afternoon report a frightful disaster and reverse for the American arms. Twenty-eight hundred men of the China Squadron have been killed, wounded and taken prisoners, and the fleet, badly crippled though it is, has been compelled to put to sea again in the endeavor to reach a neutral port somewhere along the coast of Spain or Morocco, where it is hoped the Atlantic Squadron will be within wireless range before the time limit has expired.

Details of the catastrophe are lacking, Admiral Mordaunt's report merely stating that early this morning what is now supposed to have been the new Almeranian dirigible war balloon appeared above Fossetta, and by means of the Carizzino shells, which make a dazzling illumination when they burst, burning for fifteen minutes, was

able to locate and destroy the American sailors and marines in the fort at Fossetta with the fire of one machine gun, while the fleet lay in the offing perfectly helpless.

The whereabouts of our China Squadron is unknown at present, but the strong Almeranian fleet is believed to be in pursuit, as Admiral Mordaunt intercepted an unintelligible wireless which caused him at once to abandon the lost fortress and start to sea, promising fuller reports later.

Chapter Six

The Bolt

DETAILS of the disaster filtered in at intervals during the night, but Colonel Arnold felt a burning impatience to get to the Navy Department, where no doubt there were reports not available to the public. There had been a great deal of speculation and rumor regarding the new war balloon and fire-shells with which Almerania had been experimenting for the past year. Each of the successful inventors of the new accessories to the murderous game was an American to whose entreaties the home authorities had turned a deaf ear, but whom Almerania had recognized and encouraged with rumored lavish expenditures of time and money. And this was the result. How those stupid war and navy officials must be cursing their blindness, thought the senator, himself bitter at such stupendous folly, as he drove rapidly to the railroad station with Edith.

With a final half-hearted promise that she would have a good time, she sank down in the Pullman with the morning papers they had bought on the way to the train, and though the tragedy affected her, the fact that she need feel no anxiety at the moment for Raymond made it seem less poignant, and she was slowly becoming used to the certainty that she could do no good by making herself ill.

The train reeled off the miles swiftly, the electric locomotive reducing the old-time running of ten years ago to half, hauling the long string of heavy Pullmans under the river from Jersey City to the handsome station at Pennsylvan-

ia Square in New York without a trace of the dust and soot once so prevalent in even the best trains. The girls were waiting for her, and Edith found scarcely time to brace herself for their effusive greetings before the moving train platform had deposited her in their arms.

Celia the eager, always first in everything, sprang at her with a cry of delight, while the less demonstrative Helen contented herself with seizing an outstretched hand thrust to her and waited until she could see something more than an indescribable jumble of fur coats, two hats and the graceful backs of her friend and sister. But the crowded platform offered little opportunity for more than the briefest of greetings, and motioning to the porter to follow them with Edith's handbag, Celia led the way through the surging crowds, rushing to and from the Subway entrance, and up to the street, where their automobile stood stuttering impatiently, waiting to whirl them across the city to the editor's quiet home on Madison Avenue.

"It's delightful to have you here again," gushed Celia as the limousine door slammed softly on them and the car moved off. "There's no end of things to do. Your father wrote that you were worrying yourself ill about the war. You won't do that here! You'll just be going all the time."

"I hope not," laughed Edith. "I don't want to lose my beauty sleep."

"You will, though," chimed in Helen. "We've accepted at least a dozen invitations that include you, and there's the Opera, and the town is full of good plays, and everybody you know is coming to see you!"

"Stop, stop! I'm tired already!"

"How we envied you the excitement you've had in Washington," put in the irrepressible Celia, "with all your army and navy friends hustling off to glory! Do tell us all about it."

A shadow flitted across Edith's face, and Helen interrupted quickly: "Oh, have you heard that Harriet Murray is going to marry Freddie Butterfield?"

"The idea—Fred Butterfield! I can't see what she sees in him, I'm sure."

"No, nor I," both girls replied in unison.

"And did I tell you when I wrote that papa is just moving into the new building on Bryant Square, and the *Recorder* will be issued from it for the first time on New Year's Day? He's as proud as Punch about it, too."

"I should think he would be. It is a great paper."

They chattered on gaily, and the very foolishness of their talk put new life into Edith. She met Mrs. Patterson's affectionate greeting with all her old-time enthusiasm, and the girls were reveling in reminiscence and airy gossip when Mr. Patterson came home and added his keen wit and good nature to the conversation at dinner, Edith having for the moment completely forgotten everything but her immediate surroundings.

Indeed, the sisters gave her so little time for thought that with an occasional guilty start she realized how right her father had been, and how superficial her sorrow and anxiety had proved. Did she really love Raymond, she mused, that she could forget him even in the midst of these distractions? And was she so deeply concerned in the war that she could ignore the daily papers for the sake of the engagements that had accumulated against her arrival? Even in her self-recrimination, however, she could decide after a bad moment or two that she would think it over at leisure in bed, when she had a fair chance to be undisturbed.

But it was Opera night, and the Patterson box gleamed with the three girls, modestly unconscious of the staring round, black eyes of the leveled glasses pointed at them from all parts of the house; Edith, oldest of the three, dominating her friends with her queenly beauty and exquisite gown. Mrs. Patterson was content to sit back and watch her charges and the young men with them, a clever correspondent and a new lion of poetry, rather than the opera itself, for "Tristan" was an old story to her.

The girls slept late next morning.

Mr. Patterson, whose first afternoon edition of the *Recorder* went to press at eleven-thirty, had been long gone, and Mrs. Patterson was busy about the house when they straggled downstairs, still sleepy and listless. Edith eagerly seized the morning paper to look for war news, since neither of her friends seemed interested. Prominently displayed in the right hand column of the front page was a startling announcement, dated from Gibraltar.

"What is it; a battle?" yawned Celia carelessly, seeing her start as she read.

"Read it to us, dear, while I pour the coffee," asked Helen, adding: "I never can remember, Edith—will you have two lumps or one?"

Ignoring such a trivial query, Edith read the despatch, and the two girls listened with little cries of dismay as the ominous words fell from her pale lips:

GIBRALTAR, FRIDAY.—It is believed that practically the entire American China Squadron, returning from Eastern waters to the United States, has been destroyed by the Almeranian fleet under Vice-Admiral Cellini. Three of the American vessels have just arrived in the naval harbor here, very much battered, and heavy firing was heard for an hour before they came in.

The Almeranian fleet, barely visible in the offing from the top of the Rock, retired at the three-mile limit, and the United States Atlantic Battleship Squadron, en route to Almerania from the West Indies, twenty-five battleships and fourteen destroyers strong, has gone in pursuit without stopping here. It made a dash through the Straits and is now proceeding at top speed due east.

Celia was the first to rally. "I don't believe it! I know all about the way those dreadful correspondents 'fake their copy,' as papa calls it. I know it isn't true!"

"I hope not," added Helen. "Wouldn't it be dreadful if it were so? Think of all those ships being destroyed in one fight! Why, it would be like the battle of the Sea of Japan, when we were little."

Edith remained silent. Thank heaven, Raymond had not been in that unfortunate squadron as he had wished! Had he caught up with the second? There would be a terrible fight when the two navies met, and she breathed a

prayer that the *Lawrence* might have been delayed somewhere on the road while stopping for coal, so as to let the battleships handle the enemy without his assistance. But if he were in it—

"What's the matter?" demanded Celia. "You look as if you had seen a ghost! Don't take it so hard, dear. Do you know anybody in the China Squadron?"

"Only slightly," she responded with an effort in a dull tone; "but I have a friend, several friends, in the battleship squadron."

"Oh, they'll be all right. That is the finest fleet in the world. Papa says it is the most homogeneous—whatever that means—the fastest, the biggest and the bravest anywhere. England is the only country that has anything to compare with it," Celia babbled, striving to comfort her.

Edith controlled her rising fear, stifling back the desire to rush to her room and be alone with her gnawing dread, but the food tasted bitter and when they rose from the table she went to the window and peered anxiously up and down the street.

"What are you looking for?" Helen asked sympathetically, slipping her arm around her.

"Extras," almost whispered the shaken girl.

Fortunately for Edith's peace of mind, nothing had been planned for that afternoon but shopping. Not even the attractions of the stores, however, and the interested comments of her companions, could stay the uncontrollable fear rising higher and higher in her heart like a remorseless tide, and as they drove about, again and again she stopped the carriage to buy some new and fraudulent extra, to be disappointed on seeing the old news repeated under different headlines.

At last the afternoon was gone and they had been at home some little time, Edith standing at the music-room window staring out upon the quiet Avenue, the other girls idling before the fire, when the front door banged and Mr. Patterson's heavy step rang through the hall.

"Papa!" called Celia mischievously.

"Yes, dear," the stout little black-whiskered editor replied, struggling out of his overcoat and goloshes.

"Did you bring the paper home with you? Edith has been buying extras all day by the dozen to see if they had anything new about the battle in them, but they all told the same story. I had to hold her by main strength just a few minutes ago to keep her from rushing out for another. It's a wicked waste of good pennies—five cents a copy, too! Is there anything new?"

"Indeed there is. The news is quite as bad as the yellows made it out to be. Only three ships left out of ten of the finest afloat. We got the Admiral's report just in time for the last edition.

"Oh, let's see it!" clamored his daughters. "Where is it?"

Seeing the interest in their faces, he went on: "I tell you, girls, the age of gallantry is not dead yet. This fight will show the world the sort of stuff real Americans are made of. It's the finest thing of its sort I ever read. A single lieutenant with a handful of men saved the big battleship *Constitution*, and she, with the *Essex* and the *Richard*, are all that are left of the fleet! There has never been a time, and there never will be one, when the United States will need a hero without some gallant fellow rising to meet the occasion. It was splendid. Why, it ranks with any of the most famous exploits of the navy in the old days."

"But who was it, father? What did he do? How did he do it?" cried Celia.

Neither of the three chanced to notice Edith, her face blanched, her whole position strained and tense as she listened with half-shut eyes.

"I supposed you knew something about it!" he replied excitedly. "It was Lieutenant Cuthbert, in that old 'hoodoo' destroyer, the *Lawrence*. He saved the Admiral, blew up and sank the Almeranian battleship *Imperatore* with all on board, and went down with his—Hey—Edith!"

He sprang forward, but he was not quick enough. Without a sound she

sank limply down at their feet, merciful unconsciousness deadening the pain of the unwitting blow.

Chapter Seven

The Whirlwind

WITH the next day additional news of the defeat filtered through from various sources. The disaster was even worse than the first reports had indicated, and to Colonel Arnold, at least, the astounding news of the *débâcle* in the Mediterranean came like a thunderbolt. Leaving the Senate at dusk, he felt himself grow cold as he read the huge headlines and scanned the hastily manufactured pictures of Cuthbert and the imaginary sketches of the end of the *Lawrence*, whose gallant commander's heroism and fate were the main features of the reports.

Making sure that the dreadful details were correct in substance at least, the Colonel immediately called up the Patterson house by long distance telephone to inquire if the news had reached Edith, and how she had taken it. Briefly Mrs. Patterson herself told him in hesitant sentences of her husband's unfortunate announcement, explaining that no one in the house had even guessed at the engagement. The girl was resting easily, and though they had all been very much frightened at first, the doctor assured them she would recover from her prostration in a few days at most.

With that unsatisfactory news Arnold had to be satisfied, and in response to Mrs. Patterson's statement that Edith ought not to be moved for all her begging to be taken home, he urged that she remain in New York, as he had no time to give even to her, and she must be entirely alone if she came back. Well pleased with this, and anxious to make what reparation was possible for the shock of the night before, Mrs. Patterson answered that she would tell Edith when she awoke, and added that she and the girls would take care of her.

Again in the morning, before he

thought of his breakfast, the Senator called up, and was informed that Edith had passed a fairly good night and was still asleep. Two or three times during the day did he leave his work in the Senate chamber and telephone at noon, Edith herself replying to his call in a thin, worn voice that frightened him, though he spoke cheerily and pleaded with her to keep up her spirits and not to forget that Cuthbert had died gloriously.

Wearing slowly along in the maddening transaction of routine but important business, the morning brought no satisfaction, and the noon hour found Arnold still furious at Mowbray's consistent attitude of unflinching demands for peace even in defeat, which necessarily tended to delay warlike preparations and encouraged the more timid of the senators to a policy of haggling and doubt. Consistent work under such stress was impossible, and the Colonel felt his temper growing with his anxiety as reports began to appear in the evening journals as early as three o'clock, of a terrible international riot in New York.

With the first extra brought to him by a page, he sprang up in the midst of a most important debate, forgetting completely the matter at stake, rushed to the telephone in the senatorial cloak-room, and called up the *Recorder* office in New York. An office boy answered. Mr. Patterson was too busy to talk to anyone, even Senator Arnold, the hurried lad announced. The riot began as an Almeranian celebration of the victory near Five Points; other heated foreigners who considered themselves full-fledged Americans rushed the Latins, fist fights ensued, more serious trouble quickly developed, somebody set fire to a tenement, and already half the East Side below Twenty-third Street was burning.

"Good God!" ejaculated the terrified politician, foreseeing danger to the Patterson house. "Boy—send me telegrams every half-hour from now on as the riot continues. I'll pay you well for them. Send them here, to the Capitol. Do you understand? Don't fail,

now. I must know how things are going . . . "

With the lad's ready promise of obedience, Arnold turned back to his work perfunctorily, and somehow the afternoon moved ahead, with the half-hourly messages growing steadily more and more alarming in tone. Twice did the efficient little page who brought the yellow envelopes to the anxious father hand him also a fresh extra, and the explicit news the paper gave more than confirmed the worst features of the private messages.

Five-thirty came at last, and Colonel Arnold held his watch in his hand, waiting for the delayed message that failed to come at all. Had the riot ceased suddenly? Had the troops reported called hastily from Governor's Island, the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the nearby forts succeeded in cowing the maddened horde of rioters? He was querulous, trembling, when at last the windy debate ended for the moment and he was free to go. His watch showed that six o'clock was yet fifteen minutes away when he dashed out to the telephone and called New York. Long distance was slow in answering, and when she did her voice came shrill over the wire as she inquired the number he wished.

Snapping it out with a peremptory demand for haste, he was startled by the girl's exclamation, which even the buzzing of the wires could not rob of its impatience: "Don't you know the mob destroyed all the wires in that part of the city two hours ago? The whole East Side is afire!"

Over the line the terror smote him, and cold beads dripped from his shaggy eyebrows as he jammed the receiver hastily back on its hook, snatched up his overcoat and hat, ran muttering into the street, and stumbled over a yelling newsboy. "Give me one—quick!" he cried throatily, leaving the boy gasping at the half-dollar which was the first coin the excited senatorial fingers found ready as he snatched at the extra and bolted into a lighted vestibule to read it.

Warmly the light silhouetted him

against the cold white marble to the passersby, as he stood with bent head reading the special news, a whole paragraph at a time. It was all true; New York was in the gravest danger from both fire and mobs. The mob numbered at least a million—National Guard and regulars alike were engaged in a pitched battle with them, all the dormant passions of the aliens having stirred into action at the opportunity—half the East Side, from Wall Street northward, was blazing and the firemen were exhausted—dynamite was destroying the houses and buildings by whole blocks at a blow.

The old fire-eater who had not blanched in action on the hottest fields, let the paper slip through his fingers and leaned heavily against the stone for support. But only for a moment. Pulling himself together sternly he went back to the telephone, and it was the work of a moment only to call up the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, find that no regular train could bear him soon and swiftly enough to New York, and charter a special, to be ready in half an hour, with the right of way and instructions to run faster than any train on the New York division of the road had ever been run before. He must see the President before he went, and springing into a cab, dashed over to the White House, to find him pacing the floor like a caged animal, defiant under the defeat.

In a word Senator Arnold informed him of the Senate's resolutions regarding the matter with which he had been charged, and President Burgess listened in silence, gnawing his mustache and nodding as the impatient Westerner's words outlined hastily the wishes of the committee for whose report the President had been waiting.

"And now I must be off to New York. My daughter may be in danger from the mobs at this very moment," Arnold concluded curtly, turning to leave.

"Stop!" exclaimed Burgess, speaking for the first time since Arnold had come in. "This is war. Your place is here. What is your daughter, any

man's daughter, to the safety of the nation?"

"I am going," repeated the Senator doggedly, his hand on the doorknob.

"A deserter!" sneered the President. "You promised victory! Who is to stand sponsor for defeat?"

But with an oath Arnold was gone, and at half-past one was fighting his way along Thirty-eighth Street toward Madison Avenue, through the surging crowds under a sky lurid with the reflection of a vast conflagration.

Blindly he pushed forward, thrusting men aside, snarling like the wolf he was, at each fresh delay, his hair and eyes wild, his hat gone and coat torn, his clothes muddled from an impromptu fight that had thrown him heavily into the gutter farther back. He did not look at faces. All he saw was the eddying throng, the black sea of humanity crushing to and fro. Through it he wormed his desperate way, talking to himself in sobbing undertones as he neared the block where the Patterson house stood, and about which the crowd's chief interest seemed centered.

Something pricked him violently in the breast, and he uttered an imprecation as he tried to push it aside to grapple with the man who thus dared block his way and keep him from the only thing in life he held dear or sacred.

"Halt! Keep back!" cried a stern voice sharply, and Arnold paused instinctively, recognizing the authority in the speaker's commanding tones.

His eyes cleared of their sudden fury and he looked at the man. In the fire-light the brass buttons and ornaments on his long blue overcoat and military cap showed the marks of a private of one of the regular infantry regiments, and the pricking thing was the keen point of a sword-bayonet on the muzzle of a Springfield rifle held at the charge.

"You can't come in here!" warned the voice coldly. "Stand back, now—no pushin'!"

"My daughter! My daughter!" groaned the Senator, suddenly a feeble old man, unable to hide his hurt.

"Where—there?" asked the soldier, jerking his head backward.

"Yes—for God's sake let me through!"

The infantryman lowered his menacing weapon. "There's nothin' there, sir," he muttered. "The whole block's gone!"

Chapter Eight

In the Shadow of Events

AFTER a moment's parley with the soldier who held him back, it suddenly occurred to Colonel Arnold that he might get news of Mr. Patterson in the office of a great daily nearby. Thither he rushed, to find his friend, haggard and trembling with nervous strain, arranging with the proprietors of the morning paper for the loan of some of their machines and presses until he could get his own machinery into working order in the still incomplete *Recorder* building.

Stopping only for the necessary directions, Arnold hurried away, leaving the worried editor to the pressing demands of his business. He found the family at a hotel a little farther up Broadway, where they had been glad to get rooms of any sort. Accommodations were at a premium, for the whole East Side of the city, from Fortieth Street and Madison Avenue east and south to the northern edge of Wall Street, lay a smoking, stinking heap of ruins, and in the open the poor, like frightened sheep, strove to keep warm by physical contact.

As he entered her room, Edith's face, like a wilted lily, peered up at him from the coverlids. Incoherently, sobbingly, she told her story; told how, as the afternoon waned, they gathered at the upper windows to watch the spread of the fire and the beating of the waves of the mob. Closer and closer came both fire and howling, bloodthirsty madmen, filling them with a sense of helpless terror. From the rear windows they could see the neighbors leaving their homes hastily by way of the back

yards, but Edith being so weak, they remained, hoping the fire might be stayed before the house itself was threatened.

As the moon came up blood-red through the swirling clouds of smoke and the lurid glare of the mounting flames, the servants came to Mrs. Patterson and gave their ultimatum for instant flight.

They could feel the pulsing waves of heat, see the blazing bits of board and other great sparks hurtle through the air above them, and unless the wind changed, which seemed unlikely, the fire would be upon them in a few minutes. To stay meant death by suffocation or roasting. To go out into the streets meant in all probability to be crushed in the struggle certain to ensue. Mrs. Patterson decided quickly and with the few easily carried valuables which had already been gathered up in preparation for flight, they hastened to the backyard, the half-fainting Edith assisted by the footman and butler, the maids dragging a stepladder to help them over the difficult fences.

How that horrible journey was ever accomplished the girl never knew. In her dreams she suffered it all again, climbing the unsteady stepladder, sitting on the cutting top of each fence waiting while the others were perched insecurely beside her until all the women had come up and the men lifted the ladder across to let them come down on the other side. Her hands were cut and torn by the rough boards, her fingers frostbitten and numb, her shoes and dress rent with the unending climb. Fence after fence they surmounted, through yard after yard they struggled in the half-frozen slush, blackened by falling cinders. Smoke inflamed their eyes; the darkness led them blindly into sucking mudpile flowerbeds and puddles over which thin skins of ice had partially formed. Before their toilsome journey was half over, the butler cried out and pointed behind—from the roof of the house rose a thin column of black smoke, touched with ruddy tips of flame.

Arnold could see it all, every foot of

the exhausting flight, and he drew a long breath as she told how, when they at last emerged upon Fifth Avenue, she fainted with sheer relief as she saw the sturdy regulars come swinging up the broad thoroughfare on the double quick, with fixed bayonets, scattering the mob without mercy.

When she came to, it was in the hotel, where the servants had carried her bodily, and no doctors being able to attend to a case of mere physical exhaustion when thousands lay dying, Mrs. Patterson and the girls were looking after her in spite of their own weariness and agitation. Though she could not be moved safely at once, her father arranged that as soon as she could travel she and the girls should come to the Arnold mansion in Washington, to stay until New York had once more regained its normal poise, and the horrors of the fire and riot had been swept clean. But Mrs. Patterson refused to leave her uncomfortable quarters in the hotel because of her husband's need of her while reconstructing his shattered fortunes.

His fears for Edith's safety comfortably satisfied, Senator Arnold returned immediately to Washington. After a hasty change of clothes he hurried over to the Capitol, where he found important mail awaiting him; a summons from the President, notices of committee meetings to discuss plans for the prosecution of the war, and a score of other scarcely less vital measures.

The morning papers he glanced at, too, had news, good news this time, for the Atlantic Battleship Squadron, skillfully handled by Vice-Admiral Townsend and Rear-Admirals Barry and Decatur, had succeeded in bottling up the entire Almeranian fleet in the harbor of Naporra, where it lay safe under the shelter of the guns of the forts and harbor works, and established a blockade at a safe distance with the slower and heavier ships, while the lighter Americans cruised to and fro through the adjacent waters within easy wireless hail, picking up Almeranian merchant craft whenever opportunity offered,

stopping all neutral vessels, and waiting for a chance sortie.

There was other news also. Europe was becoming restive under the war, and already rumors of discontent and bitterness were making themselves heard in ominous whispers from Paris and Berlin and St. Petersburg and Vienna, and even from London. The Continent felt itself disquieted by this sudden disruption of peace and the amazing causes of the struggle. But Arnold heeded these reports little. Europe would not dare risk a war with so skilled and resourceful and great a power as the United States. Great Britain was only a few ships ahead of us in sea power, and it was unthinkable that she would permit any dangerous coalition against us to take shape without warning us in time.

No, there was small cause for alarm there. It was merely annoying to have the Powers leering suspiciously and saying ugly things while we were engaged in hostilities. But the Senator had time for only matters of the most pressing importance, and at the Navy Department he was able to gather a clear idea of the plan of campaign. President Burgess was in the Secretary's office when he entered, looking over the war maps, stuck full of colored tufted pins showing the positions of our ships of war, the location of troops and the proposed movements to be undertaken.

"You're just the man I wanted to see," the President began curtly. "Come over here and read these maps."

The Senator nodded briskly to the Secretary and stepped up to the President with the vigor of a boy, though he had been sleepless for nearly forty hours. "What are we planning to do?" he asked.

"There is not much to be considered," remarked the Secretary slowly, "so long as Townsend succeeds in keeping the Almeranians bottled up. If they get out, we shall have considerable trouble on our hands. They have about half a dozen fast scouts that can get away from anything but our de-

stroyers and come right over here to harry our coasts."

Burgess and Arnold looked grave. That was a contingency that had occurred to neither one and President Burgess broke in sharply: "Tell Townsend he will be court-martialed if he lets a single one get past him."

The Secretary smiled. "He won't, sir. I took care of that as soon as he announced he had them safe. He is maintaining the most rigid blockade in history, and his daily target-practice is teaching them an object lesson. He wires me that the men are simply mad to steam right in under the forts and wipe them out."

"He mustn't! That would be folly. We can't lose another ship," interrupted Arnold testily. "I have hard enough work keeping the naval appropriations from being cut as it is. We'd need a whole new navy if you let him do that!"

Again the chief of the Department smiled. "There was only one man I would send into that harbor, and he went down with the *Lawrence*. Poor Cuthbert! He was the most daring and skilful torpedo officer we had."

"I'm sorry we had to lose him," said the President, "but that was better than losing Mordaunt and the *Constitution*."

Arnold winced. But neither the Secretary nor the President would understand his feelings, so he merely asked: "Well?"

"Well, as I was saying before, so long as the Almeranians are kept hiding, we shall have no trouble. President Burgess still thinks the plan you suggested to him in the first place is the best, that of capturing the island of Lercara, and I have drawn up a rough scheme for doing it."

"Good. Tell us about it. Has he told you, Mr. President?"

"No; not yet. He was just beginning when you came in. Go ahead, Mr. Secretary."

"These gray-tufted pins here," he pointed with a ruler, "at Portsmouth, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Hampton Roads, Charleston and

Jacksonville, represent comparatively obsolete vessels now employed in coast defense service. We have the battle-ships of the first rate, five coast defense monitors, twenty-two protected cruisers, and a lot of mosquito craft that are of absolutely no value in the present war for offense. But these coast defense vessels will give us all the old battle-ships and protected cruisers we need to convey the transport fleets.

"From the four largest transatlantic steamship companies I can hire eleven ships with an average speed of twelve or fourteen knots, capable of carrying something like thirty thousand men. Our own transports on this coast will take about thirty-five thousand more the first trip, and if we push the ships hard, we could land those sixty-five thousand men on Lercara within two weeks after they leave."

He jerked forward a chart of Almeranian waters and began tracing routes with a red pencil. "My own idea would be to scatter them in such a way as to attack the island at a dozen different points simultaneously."

"The War Department informs me that we can make up the attacking force of say fifty thousand regular infantry, cavalry without horses, and artillery, with a scattering of engineers and hospital corps men, the balance coming from the National Guard and other volunteers. If the attack is properly timed, all the troops should land at the same hour, rush the few Almeranians left there to defend the forts, which amount to very little anyway, and in a single day we ought to be in possession of the entire island."

"Very pretty," assented Burgess dubiously. "But how about that balloon?"

"Your Excellency need not worry about that any more. The War Department has information that it tore itself to pieces in the night attack on Fossetta, and the Almeranians have not been able to get another one ready yet."

"What do you think, Senator? Shall we do it?"

"Certainly. The sooner the better."

"When can you get your ships to sea?" asked the President, taking up his hat.

"I judge it can be done in about a week, if we work night and day. We have enough regulars within range of New York, and the guardsmen in several States are waiting impatiently for orders. I should think that about the first of February we could land in force."

"Very well, sir; do it," ordered the President, beckoning to Arnold to follow him out.

The Secretary smiled bitterly as they vanished. "Do it!" he repeated scornfully. "As if I could create a transport fleet, move an army, attack and capture a big island, simply by rubbing a lamp!"

He rolled up his maps and fell to work. But his task was complicated and delayed by the fact that within forty-eight hours after the New York riots had ended, the United States were more torn by wars and rumors than ever before in their vivid history. Throughout the entire country swept lawless bands of the Latins intoxicated with the news of victory, and equally ferocious and irresponsible mobs of other aliens in opposition to them. It was civil war, but not between Americans born and bred, and our part was simply one of resistance to the malignant cancer whose ugly red growth was steadily encroaching upon the vitals of our civilization.

In a majority of the States the National Guard had to be called out, and within a week practically the entire country lay under the duress of martial law, or what amounted to it. Through many a ruined district the passage of the avenging guardsmen, with their requirements of food and shelter, seemed to the hapless sufferers only to make their plight the worse. Yet even before order was restored and the National Guard withdrawn, the people clamored for the prosecution of the war abroad, and President Burgess, following out the plan agreed upon with Senator Arnold and the Secretary of the Navy, issued a proclamation call-

ing for two hundred thousand volunteers.

Chapter Nine

The Eclipse

TO EDITH ARNOLD the unending month that followed the report of Raymond's glorious disaster in the fated *Lawrence* proved the refinement of torture. Hers was a passionate grief that seemed to increase in intensity every day and every hour, and with it her faculty for realizing what thousands of wives and sweethearts and sisters were enduring throughout America and Almerania broadened and grew keener.

Her longing for the sight of that dear face and the sound of that familiar laugh and the tender pressure of those arms, felt so little before they vanished forever in the sparkling sapphire waters of the dreadful sea of many battles, held her firmly away from any attempt at diversion, made her wonder dully that Washington could be gay and live its usual winter life when so many a brave fellow had gone to his death.

In spite of her gloom, the spontaneous vivacity and freshness of the Patterson girls brightened up the somber mansion and warmed Colonel Arnold's heart. To Edith, however, even allowing as she did for their widely different natures, they seemed careless and unfeeling, and more than once she regretted having brought them with her, seeing them off after a stay of several weeks with a sigh of relief.

She steadily refused to go out anywhere except to the Mowbrays', where she was an almost daily visitor, and it amazed her father, whenever he could take time from the stress of the duplex campaign of war and politics he was waging with a ferocity worthy of his younger years, to observe how she seemed to gather comfort from her growing friendliness with his dignified colleague from Massachusetts. Nor did he guess that the Bostonians held to their former friendship with him

solely because of the girl and her ingenuous way of taking hold upon their heartstrings.

Senator Mowbray on his part had come to regard Edith with an almost paternal affection, and he remarked thoughtfully one evening: "If you would go to church, dear child, I think you might perhaps find a spiritual consolation and relief that mere friendship cannot give you."

"No—I cannot. Half the ministers are mad over war, and the other half keep urging the struggle on now that we have engaged in it. I can think of nothing when listening to them but the desecration of the church by the utterance of such unchristian sentiments. You are the only man I know who has been consistently a peace advocate."

The old gentleman sighed regretfully, and stroked back the thin silver hair from his forehead. "You may be right. But whether they say and do the righteous thing or not, I always get an inspiration and a sense of renewed vigor simply from being there. Sometimes I do not hear a word that is said, I am afraid, but I think of the old message of peace and help, and I come away rested and ready to begin the fight for what is just again."

As he looked at her through unclouded eyes, Edith saw in the noble face and strong lineaments the shining soul of a child, and thought that the simplicity and faith of this old man might well find something restful in the message, "Suffer little children." His religion was not one of dogma, and his admission that he could enjoy a sermon of which he heard not a word would have filled the scornful Arnold with bitter mirth and been a new joke on his Eastern associate.

Arnold had, moreover, a perception not one whit duller than that of his formidable antagonist in the Senate, and realizing Edith's condition, he suffered keenly. He felt that she blamed him even more than she knew for Raymond's death, and though he regretted the loss of so fine a man and officer, especially because he as well as Edith had loved him, his conscience

found no fault with the course he had taken. War is war, and that Cuthbert should be killed was merely one of those terrible mischances that invariably occur when the leviathan is aroused. The real blunder lay at the door of the doting old Secretary of the Navy, he assured himself repeatedly, as he watched his daughter's fresh beauty slowly wither and fade. If the old fool had not been willing to send the boy on such a plainly foolhardy mission, we should not have lost a destroyer, her ninety men and three good young officers besides their commander.

But he could not stop to mourn a dead man, no matter how dear, when the exigencies of special legislation of vital importance to the country occupied all his time not given to the manoeuvring of his pawns in the impending political affray. The city for the Convention had been well chosen, and already the Arnold myrmidons who were to stampede the Denver gathering at the auspicious moment had received their instructions, their chief's crafty plans having been rehearsed and amended and improved upon until he felt that there was scarcely a possible chance of defeat. President Burgess had also been manoeuvring, but his agents, less skilled and less sensitive to the complex influences that decide so many political struggles, offered small resistance to the boss of the West.

"Edith, dear," he announced abruptly at breakfast one June morning, "I have to go to the Convention in Denver next week, and I want my girlie to come with me. You haven't been in Denver now for two or three years, and the change of scene and air will do you good. When the sessions are over, you and Aunt Nellie can go on to Wind River and I shall have to come back to this hot inferno. Will you come?"

She looked at him listlessly, knowing nothing of his plans and understanding only that he wished her to be with him. "Certainly, dad. I'll go anywhere with you. But don't ask me to meet people, please. You know I can't do it."

"Poor little girl," murmured Arnold, stroking her cheek as he hesitated on the threshold. "I won't ask you to do anything you don't want to, but it breaks my heart to see you so peaked and forlorn. Where are your lovely roses?"

She shook her head sadly, and he went out, relieved nevertheless that she had consented to stay a while in Denver. He judged that his nomination would start once more the parched springs of her interest in life, for what woman would not be proud to rule the White House? Knowing her ignorance of politics, and feeling especially secure in the certainty that Burgess could not expose him without himself being forced from cover, Arnold saw the coveted goal almost within reach, at the expense of nothing greater than broken political promises, on which no one of experience places any great reliance.

From the seat of war the news was fairly satisfactory, and just before leaving for Denver Arnold saw President Burgess, and with the naval experts they planned a coup which, if carried out promptly, should result in a great victory at sea to be announced on the first morning of the Convention.

"It's a frightful risk to take," wavered the President.

"Not at all," Arnold replied warmly. "All Townsend has to do is to obey orders. Then he can wipe out the whole hornets' nest."

"Suppose he fails to find them?" inquired Burgess doubtfully. "What do you think, Mr. Secretary?"

"If the Almeranians take the bait, we can't very well miss them. But I am inclined to think they will simply make a short sortie, smash up our light ships and retire again."

"You don't know them as well as I do, sir," interjected Arnold quickly. "They are a brave and gallant people, but they are a trifle too fond of glory and taking a chance to get it. Once they come out, Townsend can do the rest. You see, now . . ."

President Burgess did not speak again until the navy man had gone.

"So you think that it would be a good thing for my nomination to have this naval victory announced when the delegates first convene?"

"Why, of course it would. It would be good for anybody to have such a thing happen. See here, Mr. President; we have twenty-five first-class battleships over there in fighting trim, besides the dirty and only half-manned *Constitution* and *Constellation*. Ship for ship we can match the Almeranians and still have ten ships to spare. It may not be a fair fight with such tremendous odds in our favor, but war never is fair. It isn't war when it's fair; it's gambling. We are fighting to win, and the sooner we wipe the enemy's fleet off the seas, the sooner can we end the war victoriously. You see that the news is telegraphed on to the Convention as soon as it comes in. It will make a tremendous impression, especially coming straight from headquarters."

"All right—I will. I'll give the order now, that when the news of the battle comes it is to be telegraphed unreservedly."

"Good," chuckled Arnold, rising. "I leave on this afternoon's train, sir, and you may be certain that I will look after my end of the affair. Good-bye."

He was gone, and in his place sat a demon of unrest who worried the President while the train sped Westward and the hours passed until the delegates assembled.

The great hall was full to the doors, and the meeting had scarcely been called to order and the routine business well begun before Arnold, in glancing around, saw Senator Mowbray seated not far distant. Instantly there flashed across his mind a premonition of danger and he wondered if the old gentleman could be backing a dark horse in the Presidential race. Rising promptly, he went over and shook hands.

"This is quite a pleasure, Mowbray. I didn't expect to see you here."

"No, I didn't want to come, but I believe there has been some talk about nominating me instead of giving President Burgess a second term. It's so

ridiculous that as soon as I found out I decided to come and nip the thing in the bud."

"You don't mean to say you would decline!" ejaculated the astonished Arnold.

"Certainly I would. I'm too old a man by far for President. We want a younger man, a man about fifty or less. There is plenty of excellent Presidential timber, as you are aware. I believe you have your eye on somebody, Arnold," he jested, "but I warn you, if I had the chance I'd name somebody you would never hit upon."

"Doubtless," grinned Arnold pleasantly. "But as we have nothing to say, you won't get the chance. I have understood that the delegates are pretty well instructed already. President Burgess feels quite confident."

The two men smiled each at the other, and neither noticed a telegraph messenger handing up an envelope to the chairman of the meeting, but when his gavel fell an instant later every eye turned toward him in surprise. He was standing on the platform, but so tremulous was his voice that for a moment he could not make himself heard even to the front rows. His knees shook and the hands holding the despatch trembled so that he was compelled to lay it upon the stand to read it.

"Gentlemen," he began huskily in the intense silence that held the great assemblage, "I have just received this message from the War Department at Washington. It tells—"

"Mr. Chairman, pardon me," shouted the quickest-witted of Arnold's men, seeing disaster ahead, "but if that message is from the War Department it ought not to be read to the gallery. We can adjourn into private session to hear it."

"No; this is a catastrophe that concerns the whole nation. I do not understand why it was sent, but I shall read it."

Breathless silence followed for a moment as the delegate sat down heavily and the chairman cleared his throat to begin.

When the enfolding movement of our

troops was nearing completion today in the eastern part of the island of Lercara, a hitherto unknown body of the enemy, in numbers estimated at from fifty to eighty thousand men of all arms, entrapped at least half of our forces in ambush and wiped them out. Our total loss so far in the ambuscade and subsequent fighting is estimated at between eleven and thirteen thousand killed, wounded and missing, including prisoners. Fifteen regiments are practically annihilated. The engagement continues with unabated severity.

For an instant not a sound penetrated the barnlike structure as the last notes of the reader's voice trailed off. Then a bitter groan, half sob, half fighting-growl, rose from the audience. Arnold's head fell forward upon his breast. Some idiot of a clerk had obeyed Burgess's order too literally, and this was the result! He would not dare allow his men to attempt a stampede in the face of such horrible news. His chance was gone forever. Another four years would find him too old, rejected of the political builders. He sat stunned, nerveless, the fabric of his dreams crumbling about him. But someone was speaking in ringing tones, and he raised his head to listen dully. Nothing mattered now. He could sit quiet under any nomination.

"Gentlemen," cried the delegate, "we have had enough of the disasters of war as exemplified by a President who has blundered it all through. We have lost a whole fleet. Now we have lost thirteen thousand men, and the war is not really begun. We want no more of men like Anthony Burgess. No, keep still! Let me go on! You can clap when I get through if you feel like it."

"I say we want no more of Burgess. We all know he was to be renominated. But I rebel, for one. There is only one man I know of who has dared stand out for peace all along. Who has had the courage to be called a poltroon and a coward, a white-livered cur and a traitor? You know whom I mean!" he roared, raising his voice to its full power. "I mean Rufus Mowbray, senior senator from Massachusetts. I nominate Senator Mowbray for the office of President of the United States!"

"Second the motion!" yelled a score of excited voices through the confusion of cheers and hisses and other names.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen! I protest!" shouted Mowbray, regardless of the fact that he could have no voice in the Convention's action. "I don't want the nomination! I have no desire to be President. You want a younger man. I cannot serve you!"

"You must! Mowbray! Mowbray!" howled the awakened majority in thunder tones.

"The gentleman from Massachusetts is out of order," bellowed the chairman jocosely, striving to make his voice heard through the din.

"He's all right! Nothing out of order about him!" yelled back a joker from the center of the hall. The chairman went on:

"The motion is made and seconded, putting Rufus Mowbray of Massachusetts in nomination by this Convention for the office of President of the United States. All those in favor sig—"

His cry was lost in a volley of booming cheers and shouts of approval that moved the aged Senator to tears. Beside him sat Arnold, silent, shaken to the core by the amazing swiftness with which the news of defeat had been turned into a victory for peace.

Chapter Ten

Before Dawn

WITH unanimous consent the ebullient assemblage adjourned for the day, no business being possible under such conditions of excitement, and the surprise that followed Mowbray's unexpected nomination by acclaim. Tumultuously the delegates crowded around the aged senator from the Old Bay State, congratulating him and listening incredulously to his explanations of how he came to be there.

Even Colonel Arnold, crushed and beaten as he was, managed by sheer strength to give him a warm greeting and a promise of help and sympathy. Mowbray received it delightedly, and

the senator from Wyoming turned away with a bitterness in his heart no one guessed, to find himself utterly ignored in the enthusiastic gathering, though his henchmen circled about him bewildered for a moment, offering perfunctory sympathy which was obscured by their desire to understand why the news of disaster had been given out at such a time. Greeting them unconcernedly, Arnold leisurely made his way through the auditorium toward the doors, occasionally glancing up at the gallery where Edith and her Aunt Nellie had been sitting.

On the turn in the dark staircase he saw his daughter, and his heart stood still with a throb. Her face was transfigured. The drooping mouth, the pitifully wistful eyes and blanched cheeks glowed with an almost unearthly radiance. Straight over his head she gazed into the hall beyond, and he knew that luminous glance was not for him. It was a ghastly blow—that his own daughter, the one being he loved, could even unconsciously forget him in his defeat and distress. He stepped quickly aside to wait for her.

Edith stood unmoved while the crowd passed. Mowbray came slowly toward the door, extending his hand as he saw her, but she threw herself into his arms with a little cry. His old eyes filled as he whispered a few words of gratitude for the tribute she paid. At the unexpected apparition of this radiant woman, not a man about them but fell back discreetly, waiting for the emotion each misunderstood as filial to spend itself; and of all the onlookers only her embittered father knew that the knightly old man stood to her solely as the incarnation of that world-peace for which she longed and had pleaded.

He could bear no more. Turning away, he walked rapidly to the hotel, fighting his battle as he went. He could never let her know what he endured in those few minutes in the hall and on the wayback to his rooms. And when he met her in their sitting-room, his face was unclouded as usual, his smile reassuring.

"Well—how did you two manage to

get here before me?" he inquired quickly, noting a subtle difference in Edith's expression. "I missed you in the crowd, but as I knew you could take care of yourself when Nellie was with you, I came on alone."

"Why, we stopped to congratulate Senator Mowbray, and he put us in a cab," replied the girl. "Oh, dad, I'm so sorry you didn't get it! But isn't it splendid that he should be so unanimously nominated?"

"It surely is. He is a strong man; a very able man. I congratulated him myself."

"My dear old generous dad! I knew you would," she cried happily. "And just when you were so disappointed yourself, too. I'm proud of you!"

With a laugh that seemed perfectly natural, he answered: "Of course, I'm immensely disappointed; more than you will ever know, perhaps. But I guess the fates had decided I'm not the man for President."

She stroked the heavy thatch of snow upon his head with loving fingers, soothing the battered old warrior to a degree he had imagined impossible.

"You are looking better, dear," he remarked at luncheon, eyeing her closely. "I felt sure the mountain air and the change would do you good. Now you must get your roses back."

She laughed faintly for the first time in months. "Oh, I'm so relieved to have a man who believes in peace, and who hasn't a touch of the politician in him, nominated!"

Wincing covertly, he agreed with seeming heartiness.

The Convention dragged along in its usual routine; a strong and popular running mate for Mowbray was chosen; and as it drew to a close, Arnold hurried back to Washington after seeing Edith and her aunt off to Wind River to spend the summer. With the arrival of his train, Senator Arnold experienced a sudden appreciation of the delicacy of his position with regard to President Burgess, and in the few hours that elapsed until he could go to the White House learned to dread thoroughly the interview before him.

December, 1908—3

Entering the private Executive offices with a cheery salutation, he was amazed at the appearance of the man who regarded him for a moment in stony silence. Could this be the Burgess he had known, this withered, puckered man, whose skin seemed several sizes too large for his shrunken body, and overlapped itself in repulsive folds on neck and jaw? He had known that the President was not a man of great caliber, but to see his pitiful shrinkage under the disappointment of the Convention's action, and the disaster to our arms, was too much for Arnold's sense of proportion, and as he sank unbidden into the chair beside the desk he felt hysterically inclined to laugh.

"I congratulate you, Senator," the President finally sneered. "I owe my success at the Convention entirely to your skilled manipulation. How can I repay you?"

He was evidently in a dangerous humor, thought Arnold, and must first be emptied of his wrath and then wheedled and bluffed back into a proper state of mind. To meet the wrath he would affect wrath himself, and stormed back: "You do owe me a good deal. And if your clerks kept their wits about them, or you yourself had been more watchful, this thing couldn't have happened. You know very well it was not my doing."

"Who did do it then?" snarled Burgess. "Who made this war, and kept telling me all along, until the moment of panic came in the Convention, that we must be successful and all that rot?"

"It is not my war, Mr. President," shrugged the Westerner, with a deliberate carelessness that infuriated his victim.

"Not your war! Whose war is it, if it isn't yours? Tell me that!" He banged the desk viciously with clenched fists.

Arnold rose. "I think if you wait until you cool off a little you will see whose war it is," he insinuated. "I will come back when Your Excellency is in a better frame of mind."

For a moment the two politicians glowered at one another across the table, Arnold calm and cool, President Burgess angry and disturbed. It was Arnold who broke the uncomfortable silence.

"You know the story. The papers reported everything, and you will see, when you get back your usual good sense, that the thing was entirely due to the stupidity of the telegrapher who sent on the message without first showing it to you. Neither of us could have foreseen such a catastrophe, Mr. President. All we can do is to suffer in silence."

But Burgess was not so easily mollified, and his defeat still rankled. "I tried to stop the message, but it was too late," he grumbled. "Suffering in silence is all very well, but it mends no mistakes."

Turning the subject abruptly, Arnold, who had small stomach for the whinnies of so small a man, asked for news of the situation. "The Denver papers made a good deal out of the attitude of the Powers against us. Is there anything in it? Have you any foreign advices?"

"Yes. England has sent us a friendly note protesting against the war, and warning us emphatically that all Europe is stirred up about this immigrant question. Premier Hunniwell says in the note that from advices sent to the Foreign Office by British ambassadors abroad, he judges that there is a dangerous sentiment brewing in Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg. We threatened to prevent the dumping of any more of their people here, and England fears a coalition between the members of the Triple Alliance and Russia to force us to withdraw from our position, if nothing worse."

"That looks pretty bad if it is true, sir. But what assurance have we that it is not a choice sample of diplomatic effrontery on the part of England to prevent our refusing admission eventually to her own Irish and Scotchmen, to say nothing of her colonial hordes? On the surface it looks serious, I admit, but personally, I don't believe much in talk

of that sort unless I have a better reason for it than mere friendliness."

"I sounded the French Ambassador here yesterday," resumed Burgess, "and his opinion tallied with the British note perfectly. He said he had not warned us because his foreign minister had notified him that England would."

Arnold whistled in astonishment. "That puts the thing in a very different light."

"Yes—I asked him what attitude France would take if we stood firm and a general war threatened. He bowed and smiled and said Lafayette and Washington had been excellent friends in their day. That was about all I could get out of him, beyond the ancient joke about 'all the forts in Germany point one way.' But his meaning was clear. We could count on France the moment Germany threatened; England would be neutral at first, anyway. But against us we should have the whole strength of Austria, Germany, Almerania and probably Russia. I don't like the looks of such a ticklish argument."

"What does England wish us to do?" asked Arnold uneasily.

"Why, she thinks we are justified in stopping immigration, but we must go slow about it and give the European nations a chance to adjust their economic conditions to our requirements. In a word—restrict, not prohibit at first."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I don't know. It is a mighty serious problem. A war such as might follow would drain every nation involved—Come in!"

A page entered hastily and laid upon the Executive desk some papers which the President broke open, while Arnold talked vaguely of arbitration after we should have established our position in the Mediterranean.

"I suppose so," replied Burgess, not hearing what he said. "Hello!—What's this?"

He made a dry, clicking noise in his throat and shook the paper at Arnold, who snatched it and read:

Vice-Admiral Townsend has destroyed the entire Almeranian fleet.

Back in his chair leaned the Senator, the black letters dancing like imps before his eyes. He looked at the document again. Twelve battleships and cruisers sunk in a futile sortie from Naporra, and the remaining vessels captured after a desperate conflict in which the destroyers played a dashing part. Only five of the American fleet injured, and less than one hundred of our men killed and injured. Admiral Townsend among the killed.

It was some moments before Arnold could speak. Why had not this been the news so hastily sent the Convention? Why had Townsend delayed luring the Almeranians to their fate? How . . . But queries were useless, and he turned on Burgess with a ferocity that appalled the younger man.

"I told you so! I told you he would whip them! I promised a great victory—here it is! *We* are masters now. Send another fifty thousand men to Lercara at once. Push the war. Spare neither men nor money. Now is the time to do it—before Europe wakes up. If we hurry we can have the island before intervention comes. Then let them threaten all they like. We can demand and receive indemnity. We'll make the devils pay yet!"

"We can't!" retorted Burgess, grinding his teeth in impotent rage at the belated victory. "Why didn't he do it sooner?"

He had spoken half to himself, while examining the other papers the boy brought, and Senator Arnold smiled as he heard his own thought echoed. "Of course we can, if we do it now."

"Read that and see. That is what says we can't do it." The President pushed a document across to him with a despairing gesture. "That means we must have Mowbray in to talk peace. I'll call him now."

Studiously Arnold read and reread the message.

"Mowbray'll be right over," announced Burgess, finishing his telephoning dejectedly. "What do you thing of the glorious news now? What do you think of King Edward's note?"

"What I think might not please a church member if I said it plainly. I think it's impertinent at best."

"Oh! you do, eh? Well— Come in, Senator Mowbray. We were waiting for you. Senator Arnold sticks to his original opinion that we ought to go on and fight it out to a finish, notwithstanding England's warning and the King's suggestion of mediation."

"How long do you suppose we shall be permitted to go on fighting Almerania alone, after that defeat?" inquired Mowbray calmly.

"You mean you think this will start—"

"Exactly; it will be the beginning of the end of our prestige if we go on. We shall be pitted against four or five great nations, while all the rest of the world, except possibly France, looks on in disgust. Can we afford to risk that, even admitting that by some improbable chance we should win?"

"I'm afraid you're a fanatic for peace, my dear Mowbray," jibed Arnold.

"Undoubtedly—I may be even crazier than the usual fanatic," returned the old gentleman imperturbably, "but I have the facts on my side, and you have only bluster on yours."

"What is your idea?" asked the President, willing to consider any plan for escaping a broil. "I wish your suggestions."

"There is only one thing to do, Mr. President—accept King Edward's proposals, with the understanding that he is to make propositions to Almerania for a cessation of hostilities until the Hague Tribunal can decide our joint case."

"The people won't listen to that for a minute, Mowbray. On top of this victory—our first? Never!" denied Arnold fervently.

Senator Mowbray regarded him composedly. "The people will have nothing to say about it. They are naturally wrought up now, but the preliminaries can all be settled, the matter arranged quietly, and when they cool down, they will realize it has been for their good."

"I don't believe it—no, sir!"

"I know it. Come along, Arnold; leave the President to make up his mind alone. We have both had our say. Now the matter rests with him."

June was drawing well on-toward its close, and the suffering in Wind River had reached an almost acute stage when Edith and her aunt arrived. The shaggy, general unkemptness of every farm and garden told the observant girl how bitter the struggle had been, how the town had suffered.

But though it startled her afresh, it could not drag her down again into the abyss of despair in which she had been sunk for more than six months. There was work for her to do. These were her own people; she must help them, and she took up the task eagerly, welcoming the chance to undo, at least in part, some of the mischief her father's speech had wrought.

Day by day she became more nearly her old self; day by day her color deepened and her eyes grew brighter, until her aunt felt one evening at dinner that it was safe to comment upon it openly. But before she could frame a remark adroitly enough to be satisfied with it, the doorbell rang and a moment later the maid entered with a small yellow envelope. Slightly flustered by the sight of a telegram, the good lady adjusted her eyeglasses, fumblingly tore open the envelope, glanced at the message, and gasped with astonishment.

"Father?" cried Edith, both hands grasping the arms of her chair convulsively.

Her aunt hesitated, stammered, mumbled an unintelligible word or two.

Fearing she knew not what, Edith sprang from her place and snatched at the despatch before the amazed old lady could forestall her. Holding it tremblingly under the light in the middle of the table, she read aloud:

Raymond Cuthbert alive. Received cable today. Sailing first steamer from Asolarenaga. Arrive about three weeks. Break news gently to Edith.

WILLIAM ARNOLD.

Chapter Eleven

With Opened Eyes

WAVERING under the pressure of opposing claims, President Burgess at Arnold's cogent reasoning left the War and Navy Departments to push on the war at their discretion, while he considered his best course.

"We've got to get these extra troops over, so—if you do finally yield to Mowbray—we'll be in a position to carry things off well," urged the Colonel, and the troops went.

"The public feeling seems divided," the President remarked after the expedition had vanished over the horizon. "Don't you think this is the time to give in? Nobody can accuse us of either cowardice or undue aggressiveness if we agree now."

"Oh, as you like," Arnold replied, scarcely concealing his contempt. "Even if you act now you can't really accomplish anything for a month or so. By that time we shall have Lercara anyway, and then—indemnity!"

President Burgess wavered again, but in the end yielding to Mowbray and the sentiment he represented, negotiations at which Arnold scoffed openly were begun. The Wyoming Senator was in fine fettle, and as each despatch came through, confirming his judgment in detail, Burgess was not astonished to be informed by telegraph one day that the matter had been settled by a tremendous battle in which the Almeranian army had been cut to pieces and captured, leaving us in full possession of the fairest island in the Mediterranean.

Glorying in the news, which came on the eve of the second great convention, held in Nashville, the Westerner readily predicted the selection of a strong Southern leader whose slogan would be war and whose popularity with the rank and file would knit together into a cohesive unit the antagonistic elements of a disorganized party, thus bidding strongly for the suffrage of all sections.

"It will be Gorman Wilder," he as-

sured Burgess confidently; and Wilder it was by acclaim.

"I told you so," cheerfully asserted the Wyoming Machiavelli, as the President asked how things were looking, "and you mark my words, sir—he will give Mowbray the hardest fight the old man's ever seen. Of course we'll all vote the party ticket, but I can see a lot of our lukewarm votes going to the other side." He might have added also that he anticipated the complete vindication of his own policies.

He had, however, in common with many other discontented partisans, overlooked the skill with which the great New Englander was planning his campaign. Hearing incredulously that Mowbray had abandoned the cool comfort of his summer home in Nahant for the hard work of the stump, Colonel Arnold predicted an early failure, physical as well as political.

"Mowbray's too old to stand the racket; he can't go shouting around the country like the younger men. Who ever heard of a man of seventy doing regular campaign work in summer?" he demanded, wrathful at the mere idea.

But Rufus Mowbray was no weakling, and Arnold found to his astonishment that the dormant force in the powerful old Puritan was more than sufficient to carry him through with flying colors. Going to hear him speak he was even more surprised. From sea to sea the candidate preached the gospel of peace with unerring instinct for effect. Facts and figures and quotations from the fighters themselves backed up every statement. There was a freshness and a vigor in his speech and manner, winning the most hostile audience, and Arnold was forced to admit uneasily to himself that the peace movement was gaining scope and breadth, though outwardly he decried the utterance of such sentimental balderdash.

Through the earlier days of the summer, instead of coming on to Washington as she wished, to meet the miraculously restored Raymond on his arrival,

Edith remained in Wind River. No one knew when he would arrive, nor by what steamer, and her father, urging, that she stay in the cool, bracing climate of the Western hills, wrote:

The boy will come to me the moment he gets through with his formal report at the Navy Department, you may be sure; and I will see to it that he does not waste any time in starting West. I feel sure that even his mother in Boise will have to wait while he stops off to see you.

With that Edith had to be content, though she fretted, even in her rejoicing that she must wait at least three days after he saw her father before she could see him herself. But really the one great fact was that he was alive—coming back to her out of the depths. The whole world was brighter, and she looked about her ashamed of her own joy when all her surroundings told so plainly of the irreparable loss of the simple countryfolk—women and children whose husbands and fathers were beginning to return from the hospitals, maimed and useless, or who would never return at all.

Helping with hints here and judiciously administered alms there, gently bringing the whole village under her beneficent sway, she passed the lagging days until Raymond arrived. She would not have known him as he stepped from the train, emaciated and feeble and limping.

Enthralled, she listened to his story, full of blanks and omissions and glossed-over horrors. He had driven the *Lawrence* at top speed across the Atlantic, and missing the slower battleship squadron, rushed through the Straits of Gibraltar to find a furious battle raging as he approached the fleeing China Squadron. Signaling his arrival and asking instructions, Cuthbert slowed down his gallant little craft, which for once in her stormy career was working with the perfection of an intelligent being, cleared ship for action hastily, and received the order from the Admiral to sink the enemy's big flagship. With a cheer his men responded, and the destroyer darted ahead like a swordfish, her torpedo tubes charged and open, her funnels only showing

above the spray with which she enveloped herself like a shroud as she steamed straight for the thundering black bulk of the huge *Imperatore*.

How the enemy spied him at last, when almost within torpedo range, warmed Raymond up to a fervor of description that chilled the clinging girl's very marrow. She could see the heavy shot tearing up fountains of brine, the death-dealing hail of the smaller guns peppering the water and the dark green hull of the destroyer. So vivid was his picture that she was at his side in the conning-tower as he slewed his craft around so as to bring both tubes to bear at once, reckless of the exposure to himself and his ship, and launched the deadly missiles.

She felt the heavy shell from the wounded flagship's forward port bar-bette burst in the *Lawrence's* boilers with a frightful roar, clutched at his arm as another swept the conning-tower away and the mangled little scorpion vanished in a cloud of steam and smoke and spray just as the leviathan she had smitten lurched heavily over on her side and began to sink bow foremost.

Cuthbert had been unconscious and in such rags when picked up by a cruiser, they told him, that no one could tell, except by his hands, whether he was common seaman or officer, and when his eyes did open at last to the world, he thought himself a boy again, and wept for his young playmates. Gradually he grew stronger, still ignorant of his identity, until the great Almeranian surgeon decided to perform a long-desired experiment. It might possibly cure; the chances were almost even for and against his recovery, but he was useless as he lay, and the scientific world—Edith shuddered at the heartless term—would benefit in any case, so the knife did its cunning work. This ghost of the man she loved frightened her, even with his unnatural voice, and she was almost glad when he had taken the Westward train again and gone to his mother.

But his restless spirit could not be content at home. Before Edith expected him, he was back with her, and

the weeks flew as they went about helping the villagers, or rambled slowly through the foothills of the mountains, or took long rides as Raymond rapidly regained his former splendid physique and Edith found again the roses whose loss her father had mourned.

Long before they were ready to return to the Capital, came a peremptory command to Cuthbert to report in person at once to the Secretary of the Navy. As Raymond had not yet resigned, the order's cold official wording aroused Edith to fresh terror. It was unthinkable that the Department could be so short of officers that it would order to active duty again anyone whose sick leave had still two months to run. But she would not lose sight of him for a single day if it could be helped, and she and her aunt prepared to go on to Washington with him.

Half the journey was still to be accomplished, when copies of Eastern papers brought into the train made the travelers forget all but the absorbing news before them. Almerania was on the point of yielding to the strong world-sentiment aroused by King Edward, and in a few days more hostilities would be a thing of the past and peace virtually restored. In Washington, however, Colonel Arnold believed the peace sentiment exaggerated, and depended upon the coming election to determine the attitude of the country definitely.

Edith, wrought up as she was by Cuthbert's sudden order, could think of nothing else until he came proudly back from the Department, with a thin, paper-covered roll, and told her how he had learned the Secretary's wishes and replied to them by informing him of his approaching marriage and the consequent necessity of resigning from the service as soon as the war terminated.

"But that didn't stop him," he exclaimed, rapidly removing the wrapper from his gingerly-handled packet. "Look at that, dear, and see what you think of it!"

He handed her a heavily inscribed parchment, engrossed in difficult char-

acters, which in her excitement she found illegible.

"Read it to me!" she cried. "I can't make it out!"

"I can't," he stammered bashfully. "It's a diploma for—for—for good conduct in action."

She looked again, her eyes clearer, and the meaning of the bit of ribbon-decorated parchment flashed upon her as she grasped the two great words that blazed at the top of the document—"For Valor."

"Now this!" He pushed the other paper into her hands. "I am no longer a lieutenant, dearest. Think of it—two hundred and forty-six numbers at one jump! I almost hugged the Secretary."

"Captain!" she whispered fondly, nestling close to him. "My Captain!"

Within two weeks the war was over, Almerania agreeing to an armistice to last until the controversy could be settled by the august Hague Tribunal, while the foreign newspapers rang with the praises of King Edward VII as a promoter of world-peace, and the American yellows villified President Burgess and ridiculed the stately old King.

Edith did her best to make her father see the stupendous folly of the struggle he had provoked, since the question in debate must after all be settled in some other way than by arms. But though he admitted readily enough that on the surface it looked like a waste and a setback, morally as well as officially, Colonel Arnold was by no means sure that the country at large thought as Edith did, and as Cuthbert was beginning to. The election would tell, prophesied the Senator astutely. But in all his forecasts, the otherwise shrewd politician neglected one thing—the dying out of the jingo spirit in the many districts where new-made graves or memorials told the cost of the conflict.

Mrs. Mowbray, placid as ever, and sure that the inscrutable Providence which ordains wars was now satisfied to end one, irritated both Cuthbert and Edith almost as much as Leila amused them. The young girl's hearty enthusiasm for peace, born of her father's

nomination, was naïve and refreshing in its childlike frankness.

"Of course peace is fine," she confided to Raymond. "Naturally I would think anything was fine that papa approved of. But don't you think yourself we are better off for having had the war?"

"Well, I don't know. What do you think?" he answered cautiously.

"I know we are—and papa's going to be President! Just think of me in the White House!"

Cuthbert smiled. "You're not counting your chickens too soon, I hope."

"Wait and see. Papa will win. Hurrah for peace!" she laughed, cheerfully disregarding her former inability to see anything but national cowardice in a refusal to fight.

Though she displayed her feeling more openly than the others, they all awaited the contest with impatience. The Capital simmered with excitement as it had not since the early days of the war, and on election night both the Arnolds and the Mowbrays welcomed the distraction afforded by the *première* of a play fresh from Broadway's approval. At the right above the stage, the Mowbray box was brave with its array of guests and family, while Senator Arnold, on the other side of the house, occupied the stage-box, Edith and Raymond having as their companions the Patterson girls and an eligible young French attaché.

To the rest of the audience the comedy ran fast and brilliantly, but to the two senatorial parties its merriment was forced, its situations impossibly long drawn out, its action unendingly slow. When the curtain fell on the first act, however, and a man came before the drop with a sheet of paper in his hand, the applauding house silenced its approval and listened breathlessly, fully aware of the importance of the news.

"Owing to severe weather in many States," he read slowly, "the returns are somewhat delayed, but partial figures indicate that in Massachusetts Senator Mowbray has snowed Wilder under."

A clamor of cheers interrupted him, but the reader waved his hand for silence and went on. "Tennessee gives Wilder, its native son, between fifty and seventy-five thousand less than Mowbray. Reports from twenty-seven States, with some election districts missing, indicate that Mowbray is elected and Wilder overwhelmingly defeated. The country is swept by the peace sentiment. There has been practically no disturbance at the polls."

Tumult followed. Someone started the shout of "Mowbray! Mowbray!"

Taking it up right and left throughout the theater, the entire audience joined in the demand for a speech by the discovered President-elect. Modestly keeping in the rear of his box, Mowbray waited in vain for the clamor to cease, but as it only increased with the moments, he stepped to the front and raised one hand for silence. Instantly there was quiet, and every face turned toward the commanding old man gazing down upon them, white and reluctant in the moving stillness that greeted him more warmly than the noise which had gone before.

When he spoke, it was brokenly:

"Friends, I did not seek this honor

until I felt assured it was your will. I serve no party, owe no political debts, obey no master but my conscience, make no promises. More than this I cannot say—that to the limit of my powers, of my life, if need be, I will serve you and my country honestly and loyally, keeping ever in view the glorious goal of universal peace and amity."

Making herself heard with difficulty through the thunder of approval and the ringing cheers that answered his brief declaration of principles, Edith turned away from the Mowbray box and laid her hand gently upon her astounded father's arm.

"Father, dear old dad—won't you go and congratulate him?" Her face shone with the same ethereal radiance that had so startled him at the Convention, and as she spoke again he caught the words faintly: "Peace, dad; peace on earth, good will to men. Let him know, as I do, how generous you are!"

For a moment the Colonel hesitated, but Cuthbert rose. "I will go with you," he said unsteadily, and led him from the box.

THE END.

IF I WERE YOU

By M. T. ROUSE

IF I were you, and Love should hold
 Out tender arms, close to enfold
 Me, all his own, for life's brief space,
 I'd seek no sweeter resting place,
 For cheek of rose or locks of gold:
 Nor bid the happy light grow cold
 Within my eyes, lest Love be told
 A secret, and take heart of grace,
 If I were you.

I'd heed his story, sweet and old,
 Nor deem my dear lips over bold
 To meet his thus. What though a trace
 Of rose-hued joy illumed my face?
 I'd let him read, and be consoled,
 If I were you.

THE PADDED FOOT

By DIRK VAN DOREN

“**A**ND so you would like me to tell you the story of the greatest mystery that ever came into my experience, eh? Well, I will try to gratify you. I have one in mind now—but I won’t anticipate; I will let the story speak for itself.”

We were facing each other from either side of the fireplace wherein a log was burning brightly, for the October nights were full of chill. Our camp where we were to spend a month each autumn was lost in a wilderness of mountains in the far State of Idaho. This was only the second year of our vacations taken together in that way, but we seriously intended to make them an institution.

Von Kleber, as we will call him, for the very good reason that it is not his name, although that part of him was German, had retired from active service, notwithstanding the fact that he was still a young man as years are counted. I was older, and also retired; and both of us had seen service—secret service it was—in nearly every country of the globe. Von Kleber had been really great in his profession, while I—well, I had been successful. Let it go at that. I had often wondered why he was content to give up his career so early in life. This story was to tell me that.

“It began peculiarly; in a Pullman, to be exact,” he began meditatively. “The time was about seven in the morning and the train was rushing toward New York at the rate of a mile a minute. A steward had passed through proclaiming that breakfast was ready; an announcement quite

welcome to me, inasmuch as I had left my berth before six. I was about to rise in response to this summons when two people, a man and a woman, passed through our car evidently bent upon the same errand.

“My eyes happened at the moment to be fixed upon a woman who was seated facing me at the opposite end of the car. I had not noticed her before, although it struck me in that first fleeting glance at her that she was singularly attractive; but I had scarcely had opportunity to observe this much when she suddenly dropped her veil, and I thought that I detected in her expression, as she did so, a flash of startled recognition of the two individuals who were passing through the car. The idea was transitory, however, and I speedily forgot it, for the thought of breaking my fast was uppermost in my mind; and I followed the two who had gone before.

“There was only one vacant table in the dining car. It was one of the smaller ones made to accommodate two persons only. It happened to be the first table as I entered; and I occupied the chair facing the engine.

“I had given my order and was awaiting its service when with a swish of silken skirts and a delicately faint odor of exquisite perfume, the woman of the veil was shown to the remaining chair at my table and seated herself opposite me.

“Her back was toward the body of the car, and because our table was the one nearest the end I meditated that it would be an act of courtesy on my part to offer her an exchange of seats,

which I did. She possessed a really remarkable face when she smiled, as I now observed as she answered me, declining my proffered offer with the faintest suggestion of a shrug, and when I reminded her that her view was limited, inasmuch as the entire space of the car was behind her, she smiled again, and replied:

"You forget, sir, that while ostensibly the people in the car are behind me I am really facing them all, since there is a very excellent mirror at your back."

"The waiter appeared, then, to take her order, and while she was giving it I took occasion to observe her more closely.

"Hers was not a beautiful face, but it was strong, full of character, and strangely interesting to me. Her eyes were large and dark and brilliant, and her complexion had that peculiar creamy quality which is both rare and beautiful. Her features were perfect, and, for the rest, the *tout ensemble* was entirely in keeping with what I have already described. And yet there was a gloomy introspective character about her expression, which, while it contained nothing of somberness, seemed only to add to and emphasize her charm.

"While we breakfasted opposite each other we chatted pleasantly together upon indifferent topics; but I noticed while we talked that her eyes frequently sought the mirror behind me, invariably taking the same direction, so that I, always observant, decided that she was furtively watching the two people before whose appearance she had so recently dropped her veil.

"I think that much will suffice for the part of the episode which relates to the dining car. It made no lasting impression on me at the time, although I was to recall it later, and with considerable emphasis. I might add that we both lingered long over our breakfast; I because of the charm of her presence opposite me, and she, as it appeared later, because she did not care to leave her seat until the two persons who interested her had left theirs and passed through the train.

"You must understand this about the incident: that while my professional instincts were in no way aroused, the interest of my *vis-à-vis* in the two persons referred to attracted me, and as they passed us in leaving the car to return to their own, I took occasion to scrutinize their faces rather closely. You know that I never forget the features of a person, once I have attentively observed them, and this occasion, as I later discovered, was no exception to that habit and talent of mine.

"When we were again in our own car I took advantage of the companionship so pleasantly begun at the breakfast table and seated myself in a vacant chair opposite her, where for an hour or more we continued to chat in the same impersonal manner we had adopted at breakfast.

"Then I went forward to smoke.

"Fate indicated for me a seat beside the man who had interested my unknown companion; that is, it was he or the woman with him who had interested her. I had not determined.

"You know how men who are seated side by side in the café of an eighteen-hour Pullman train between New York and Chicago fall naturally into conversation. We began by a reference to the beauty of the morning, which was succeeded by some comments upon the excellence of the service, drifted into politics, upon which subject he was densely ignorant, and finally somehow merged into the subject of entertainments, theaters, concerts and the circus, so that at last I discovered to my great surprise that the gentleman—for he seemed a gentleman—with whom I was conversing had been at some time in his past a trainer of wild animals, and had now become a dealer in them. His conversation on this subject was most entertaining, for, as you are aware, it is a topic which has always fascinated me.

"Finding that I was interested, he became even more entertaining. He told me many things that I had never known before, and expounded learnedly upon the characteristics and

qualities of different animals, among which none are so interesting as the cat family.

"I did not learn his name, nor did I give him mine. Our cigars finished, we parted as we had met. I returned to my car and again seated myself opposite the woman who had been my companion at breakfast.

"We were talking together across the aisle of the car, for the seat I had taken was opposite hers, when the dealer in wild animals passed through it on his way to his own; but he stopped so that he stood exactly between the woman and me, and spoke to her, and in a tone so low that I did not catch the words he uttered. I heard her reply, however. It was:

"'You are evidently mistaken, sir'; and the same fascinating and inscrutable smile she had visited upon me an hour or more earlier illumined her face. I heard him say:

"'I beg your pardon, madam,' and he passed on through the car and disappeared.

"Now I had watched this small scene closely and I will swear to you that I did not observe an expression upon her face or in her eyes, or the suggestion of one, which was not entirely in keeping with the remark I had heard her make use of. His face and its expression I had not been able to see. When he was gone the woman and I resumed our conversation, and neither of us made any comment concerning the episode I have described.

"I suppose, Dirk, if I were writing a novel or telling a romance, I would caption what has already been said as the prologue, for that is literally what it amounted to. Chapter first would begin almost a year later; and you must understand that all this happened before you and I knew each other.

"Did you ever see a black leopard, Van Doren? I don't suppose you have ever made a companion of one, but did you ever have an opportunity to study or to regard seriously one of those most beautiful and superlatively graceful of all four-footed creatures? No? Well, if the opportunity should come,

don't neglect it. You will be repaid for the trouble it will give you. I remember that the animal dealer discoursed at considerable length upon the subject of black leopards that morning in the café car. A black leopard has much to do with this mystery that I am unfolding to you, hence my reference to the subject.

"I was in the city of—never mind what city it was, since that is not a necessary part of this story. I had met, during the preceding evening, an old friend of mine; a former instructor, to be more exact, whose profession was the same as ours, and who has since died. I was at breakfast on the morning of the day following my encounter with him when a boy passed through with a card, calling my name. When my friend was shown to me he said:

"'I want you to go with me, Von Kleber, to a house in Grove Street where a most remarkable thing has happened. A beautiful woman has been killed by a leopard, and under circumstances so strange and unusual that I think you will be interested.'

"He then related to me the following circumstances:

"A certain Monsieur and Madame Trouville had been living for several months in the Grove Street house, which they had taken, furnished. The man, a Frenchman, was a dealer in wild animals, although he affected only those that had been thoroughly trained. He was said to possess a remarkable ascendancy and control over them; a quality which was also possessed by his wife. She was now dead, having been slain by a pet black leopard which they had been in the habit of keeping near them. During the greater part of the time the leopard was confined in a portable cage furnished with what was supposed to be adequate iron bars, and it was studded with steel facings inside in order that the animal might not gnaw it. A part of the entertainment at that house—and there had been much of it—was to exhibit this beast to the guests, and in the exercises the animal was forced to go through the woman invariably had been the exhibitor.

"During the night just past, the animal had escaped from its cage in a manner incredible to relate, and which would seem impossible of achievement; and had, with instinctive sagacity, sought the bedchamber of its mistress and killed her. But it had done this without mutilation. Then, as if appalled by the extremity of its own act, it had slunk away, finally escaping from the house by leaping through a window into the street, carrying the glass with it. It was the crashing of the glass when the animal escaped that had startled the other inmates of the house to wakefulness, and so brought about the discovery of the crime, if crime it might be called. You will discover presently that I speak advisedly as to that.

"I went with my friend to the house in Grove Street and found that conditions were about as he had described them. The cage in which the leopard had been kept was located in an unused conservatory which opened from the library. It stood upon blocks of wood so that its floor was about on the level with the middle button of my waistcoat. As I have described to you, the inside of the cage was faced with steel plates which were fastened to the oak planks with screws, and the front was protected by the usual bars.

"Two of these bars had been bent aside exactly as if a giant in strength had seized them in his hands and pulled them in opposite directions, and thus a space was left which was more than sufficient for the passage of the lithe and sinuous body of the leopard.

"The door which communicated between the conservatory and the library was found ajar when the room was visited after the death of the mistress of the house was discovered, although it was positively asserted by a servant that he had personally closed it before he retired for the night. He had not fastened it otherwise, because there were no fastenings upon it.

"The suite of rooms occupied by Monsieur Trouville and his wife was on the second floor, her own sleeping apartment being at the front. It was not

known whether her door opening upon the hall had been closed or not; but the leopard, it seemed, had gone directly to it, directed there doubtless by an instinct I cannot describe, and which we humans will never understand.

"It was supposed that the animal had wakened her before making the attack, or that she had started from her sleep when it entered the room. At all events she was found at the opposite side of the apartment lying upon her back. Her neck had been broken. There was a bruise over one temple where the padded foot of the beast had evidently smitten her, and it was the awful force of that blow that had broken Madame Trouville's neck. At her throat there were four incised wounds made by the leopard's teeth where it had seized her with its jaws. But the beast had done no more than to choke her with them. There were no lacerations, no mutilations. But the woman was dead and the leopard had escaped, as was evidenced by the shattered glass of the window.

"Beneath the window, outside, there were several spatters of blood, indicating that the animal had not passed unscathed in its escape through the window; but although the street was searched thoroughly and indefatigably, no other trace than this was ever found of the animal.

"Now, Dirk, the remarkable circumstance in connection with this matter, the one which impressed me strangely that morning, was that I instantly recognized in the features of the dead woman the companion of the 'animal' man I had chatted with a year before. And, of course, it goes without saying that Monsieur Trouville was that man.

"When I talked with him, he seemed to be benumbed by the awfulness of the tragedy. He was standing beside the corpse of his wife when I first saw him, looking down upon her with the strangest expression I have ever seen. There were terror, unbelief, anger, sorrow, desperation and a veritable horripilation of fear in every attitude he assumed and in every glance of his now furtively watching eyes. When I

questioned him and recalled the circumstance of our former meeting he merely nodded, apparently without comprehension. When I asked him the useless and entirely inane question as to why he had kept such a beast in the house at all, his reply was merely a shrug of the shoulders. Later, when I induced him to go with me into the conservatory, and showed him the cage and the bended bars between which the leopard had escaped, he touched them tentatively with the tips of his fingers, nodded, smiled, frowned, shrugged his shoulders, and turned away without comment. When I suggested to him that the leopard could never have bent those bars, as apparently had been done, without outside aid he shrugged his shoulders again. Shrugs were, in fact, his only recourse just then; but he did manage to respond this time.

"But the leopard has done so. You can see that for yourself," he said. "No one assisted her."

Von Kleber was silent for so long a time that at last I demanded, somewhat impatiently:

"Well, what more?"

"That is all," he said.

"What!" I exclaimed, "is there no point to your story? You haven't yet developed the mystery you promised in the beginning!"

"Oh, yes," he said, "there is a point to it; and there was a very great mystery."

"Well, didn't you investigate it?"

"I attempted to do so."

"Of course you solved it ultimately?" I suggested, with conviction.

"It was solved, as you say—ultimately."

"Then finish your story," I demanded. "I decline to be left in the air like this, with a 'to be continued in our next' ending to your tale."

He shrugged his shoulders much as that Monsieur Trouville he had been describing might have done.

"I will tell you about the black leopard first," he said, in an expressionless monotone. "It had been procured through the Hagenbeck agency, in Belgium, and was by them received in

their regular shipment, but was reported to have been in captivity long before they purchased it, and to have undergone considerable training. It was an intelligent beast of its class, and readily responded to the instruction of Monsieur and Madame Trouville when they came into possession of it. One of its tricks was to open doors quite readily by turning the knobs thereof with one of its padded paws. So much for the leopard.

"The two iron bars that had been bent so readily by the beast had been subjected to a chemical treatment which rendered them almost as pliable as lead, so that in reality a child might have pulled them aside sufficiently to create the aperture through which the beast made its escape. This fact I discovered while in the conservatory with Trouville, who, however, merely raised his eyebrows when informed of it."

"But where does the other woman come in?" I demanded of him when he was again silent. "She of the veil. She with whom you conversed so pleasantly in the Pullman car when you first saw these people, and who later denied an acquaintance with Trouville. What has that circumstance to do with your story?"

There was an interval before he replied. Then he said:

"To answer your questions properly, I must step aside out of myself, as it were, and reply impersonally, speaking only in the third person. I will tell you, in other words, what I came to know about these circumstances later."

I waited and presently he continued:

"Trouville, the animal dealer, evidently understood the secret of, and comprehended the mystery surrounding, his wife's death at the time it happened. Months later there was an interview between him and my breakfast companion of the Pullman train. I will quote it. They met, no matter how or where, and when he again claimed acquaintance with her she did not deny it; she only smiled upon him with that same inscrutable expression to which I have already referred; and he said to her, calling her by name:

"That was your work, the softening of the bars that the leopard might escape, and the training of the beast to perform a certain act, unerringly?"

"Yes," she asserted.

"Then why did you not train the animal to kill me, instead of teaching it to select the victim it did?" And she smiled again as she replied to him:

"Because in teaching it to slay her, I killed you both. I took her life, and I made you understand that you, yourself, not I, was the mainspring behind the leopard's act."

"Then she rose and stood before him, her somber eyes flashing, and she added:

"You do not need to ask me why I did it; you know. You have reaped only what you have sown. It was you who taught me how to train beasts like that leopard, and it is you who have told me many times that you never knew anyone who could exercise the control over them that it was my talent to attain. You know what happened after that; how you wronged me and deserted me, and made that other woman your wife, which relation should have belonged only to me; and I know how she plotted, and strived, and sought by every means in her power to become my undoing, and yours. She and you reaped what you had sown. I was five years training that beast to do what it did, and it was I who finally sold it to the agent of Hagenbeck, with the suggestion that a ready purchaser might be found in Monsieur Trouville. After that I never lost sight of it until it came into your possession. I taught it to open closed doors by raising latches and pressing them, and by turning knobs with its padded feet. And I taught it—oh! how thoroughly I did teach it that greatest trick of all—to become enraged by the scent of a certain perfume that is not easily obtained. A phial of that same perfume was despatched, by my order, to Madame Trouville, on the day that preceded her death. I knew she would make instant use of it, because it is exquisite. The odor of it is about me now, clinging to me while I talk with you, Trouville, and if the

black leopard were here she would kill me as she slew your wife. But she will do no more killing because of you, and your lesser crimes. She has paid the penalty of her part of the misdeed, for I waited for her outside your house that night. She came to me quickly, for black leopards do not forget. I chloroformed her. But there is more; more than that. I knew when and where the cage for the leopard's accommodation was ordered, and I found an opportunity, before it was delivered to you, to have two of its protecting bars removed and replaced by others supplied by me; for I knew that when the night came and your wife would visit it before retiring, having about her the scent of that perfume which angered the beast, it would after her departure hurl itself resistlessly against the bars of the cage, and sooner or later it would find liberty by means of the weakened bars I had supplied. And then, following out its careful training of five years, it would unerringly follow that hated scent to its predestined victim. You were your wife's murderer; not the leopard, nor I. You prepared the way for the crime, and invited it. Now, pay the penalty and kill yourself!"

"You did all that?" he exclaimed. "You did all that in order that I might regard myself as the real perpetrator of the crime?"

"Yes," she replied. "You began it when you deserted me, just as any assassin begins the same sort of thing when he sharpens his knife by whetting it on a stone. You sowed the seed. This is the harvest. Or are you such a coward that it is only grown, after all?"

"He bowed and left her without another word. But that same night in the room at his hotel he shot himself."

"And the woman!" I exclaimed. "What did she do?"

"The woman was my wife," he replied slowly and softly, staring into the fire.

I started to my feet with my hands clenched so tightly that the finger-nails bit into the flesh, and I cried out:

"What is this you tell me, Von Kleber? Knowing that woman's his-

tory as you do know it, and in the face of the horrible crime she had so long meditated and finally committed, you married her?"

"No," he replied, still speaking softly and without removing his gaze from the fire. "I did not know of it. She told me the story when she was dying, two years ago. I married her a little more than a year after our first meeting on the Pullman train."

He sighed deeply, passed his right hand softly across his brows, and added, still addressing the glowing fire:

"That is why this is the greatest mystery I have encountered in my career. Because I loved her from that moment, when I first looked into her eyes, and because, if she were living now, I would still love her in spite of what she did."

BONDAGE

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

I AM the slave of day,
And underneath the sun
I play my part with stubborn heart
Until the day is done;
I do the petty task,
I earn the grudging pay,
And none can guess I wear a mask,
Indentured to the day.

But when the sun has set
And labor ends again,
How easy to forget
The walks and ways of men!
Deep in my heart I seek
The lilac and the rue,
The white rose and the rose of red:
The memory of you.

What though the miles divide,
What though the years are past?
Across the night I dream aright,
And am myself at last;
A bondsman of the day,
While day is on its throne,
The secret stars all know I am
Your slave, and yours alone!

KEPT HIM BUSY

CARRIE—I made Arthur apologize for kissing me.

LENA—When?

CARRIE—Between kisses.

A VERY PRETTY QUARREL

By CAROLYN WELLS

HE—Tell me you love me, pretty poppet
SHE— I love you more than you love me!
HE— Oh, no! Excuse me, my own moppet;
But truly, sweet, that cannot be!

SHE—What cannot be?
HE— That you *could* love me
More or as much as I love you.

SHE—Ah, so you set yourself above me?

HE— No, no! not that!

SHE— Oh, yes, you do!

HE— Now do be reasonable, dearie.

SHE— I will be, sir, if you'll allow
I love you best.

HE— You make me weary!

SHE— Well, just admit it, anyhow.

HE— I won't!

SHE— If you *did* love me best, dear,
You'd say whatever I might ask,
Because I ask it.

HE— Chuck the rest, dear;
You've set me now an easy task.

SHE—I love you best! Is not that so, love?

HE— It is; and thus we meet the test
I say what you command, you know, love,
Only because *I* love *you* best!

SHE—You horrid thing!

HE— Why, what now, Janet?

I said just what you asked me to!

SHE—You're mean and cruel!

HE— You began it!

SHE— I didn't! You did!

HE— No; 'twas you!

HE— Come, dearie, stop this silly snarling;

You *do* love most, I spoke in jest;

SHE—No, no, *your* love is greatest, darling;

HE— No, my sweetheart, *you* love *me* best!
(Repeat ad lib. D. C. al fine.)

SEVENTEEN CANDLES

By GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

IN my studio there are many candlesticks, brass, iron, silver, yes! even a gold one. They have histories, these candlesticks, histories that some day I may recount to you. My studio is an ideal place for candlelight: it is pillared and raftered, and mysterious shadows hang over its entrances and the little windows in the eaves. . . And at night, when I light the long waxen tapers, the ghosts of ideas knock at the door of my imagination and clamor to be imprisoned upon fair, white paper.

But when the prima donna comes I do not light candles. Then the studio has only the great red glare of the fireplace, and I pile on more wood that she may forget there is other light needed.

The prima donna does not like candles. She tells me they remind her of the dead. And that her golden voice may rise to my eaves, I forego my cherished tapers.

Tonight she told me the truth.

I did not expect her. She was to have sung Marguerite to Bassani's Faust, but it appears that a touch of bronchitis made that impossible. I was lonely and maybe a little sad when she ascended from her studio below; and she found me playing "Träumerei" very softly on my flute. She enters when she wills, for my servant has his orders. I did not know of her presence until my studio slowly darkened behind me; and, as the last note of my "Träumerei" lost itself in the shadows, a light breath over my shoulders extinguished the candles on the music rack.

"You would not have lighted them had you known I was to be here," she said, and then she told me of the bron-

chitis, but resumed immediately after the subject of the candles. "I hate them, dear poet. It is a story—why. But if I tell you, you must not write a poem about it. It is, true, this story, and poetry should have no truth in it. Truth is ugly—don't you find it so?"

"Since you are truth, madame, no," I said.

With her wild, dark beauty she brings me always the atmosphere of a barbarian court over which she rules, and I am tempted to be stately and courtierlike. But it was her night for speech, since she did not heed me, but ran on with what she had to say; and so I learned of the seventeen candles and the girl she called Christine.

"Why I hate candles—I told you they reminded me of the dead. But also of this story. And that is the same thing, for there are dead people in this, too. Janet and Marjory and Aunt Mary—all dead! And Christine, too, of whom only a part died. But such a great part, poet!

"They were all of one family, the—Wicklows, shall I say? Yes, that is near enough.

"Perhaps you do not wish to hear this story, but I shall tell you anyhow, since your music has made me sad. There should be a very stern law forbidding sad music. I would sing joyful, sprightly things that would make them glad. There is not enough gladness in the world. But Mastrini—my teacher—

"Do you know all of that, poet? How he took me from the chorus of a burlesque and for five years—! Perhaps you do, for I am too much of a chatterbox, I'm afraid, and—

"But where was I?"

"Oh! it was of Mastrini, yes! He said I had the soul that had suffered and that understood, and that the great music of the masters was written for such as I, since greatness is only achieved when happiness is lost. Do you find that so?"

"But—the Wicklows—and why I do not like candles! It was of them the 'Träumerei' made me think.

"Poet, you have known of very poor people who bore a great name and were proud—Merciful Mother! so proud! That was the way with the Wicklows.

"You see, they had been the great people of the countryside, and their family had lived at Wicklow Hall—for so many years I cannot remember! But it was cards and horses and drink and not understanding business—and now that last of the Wicklows lived in the house that had once been the lodge-keeper's. It was tiny! And around it was a little plot of ground—maybe an acre or so—and there they raised cabbages and beets and potatoes and had a grape arbor and some strawberry beds and three cows—and no servants!

"They were very poor, these Wicklows, and there were so many of them. Father and Marjory and Janet and little Lovejoy and Cecil—and—of course, Christine. She was the only one that was not sickly: the youngest girl, seventeen at the time I am telling you about. And the two boys were younger than she. The mother died when little Cecil was born, and Christine only remembered her as very weak and white and shrinking when father had terrible fits of rage because he was poor and the Manninggaults had Wicklow Hall.

"Father Wicklow despised these Manninggaults because they had made their money from leather tanning. Of course their name was not Manninggault—nothing half so distinguished. Manninggault is a name I took from an English novel I am reading. Do you like it? But about them—

"They hated father too, because he would not let them have the chapel.

The Manninggaults wanted the chapel and the burying ground horribly, but father—that is, the Wicklows' father, you know—said that the bones of no leather tanner should disturb the rest of his ancestors. He said it just like that, for he was a gentleman of the old school—isn't that what you call them?—and perhaps what you might call florid, too. But terribly in earnest!

"It was very, very foolish of him not to sell the chapel, because we—the Wicklows—were so terribly poor, and the Manninggaults would have given such a lot of money for it. But no one could talk to father! And now that I have told you about the chapel I will speak of the candles.

"It was a custom—a very old custom—in the Wicklow family that when one of them died and had been placed in the vault just the same number of candles as the dead person was years old should be set up in the chapel before the image of the Blessed Virgin. And on the night of the burial each living Wicklow should go into the chapel and remain for an hour on his knees, praying for the soul of the dead. And when one came out, another went in. So the whole night was spent and the buried one was not lonely. Does it sound strange to you? But that was their custom.

"When little Marjory died—that is, I do not mean she was *little*, because she was older than—than Christine. Not little because she was so young, but because she was lame and very pitiful to look at dead. This story is really about Christine, so I should tell you how Christine cried and cried as she knelt before the twenty-one candles in that dim, damp, creepy chapel and prayed for poor, lonely Marjory, and thought how much dimmer and damper and creepier it was in that horrible vault—she was just twenty-one, poor Marjory, and that was why they burned twenty-one candles! It was typhoid that killed her, and then she had been always frail and sickly—

"They were all that, I think I told you, except Christine! She was young and healthy, and she loved life and did

not care about the dead and gone Wicklows and their glory as the others did.

"Their pride and their poverty made the rest of them very unhappy. They did not have any talent for anything, poor dears! But they were so proud that they looked down on all the new wealthy people who came to the valley. But the old families came to see them and sent their servants to buy the Wicklows' garden truck and milk, and so they just managed to live. And sometimes the new wealthy families did, too. Poor father—Wicklow—did not know that often he despised those who were helping him to live.

"And then Aunt Mary died! She was very old, and they burned fifty-two candles for her. It was so expensive, for father would not have any but the best wax—the kind they burn in churches—but it was their custom! Oh! I must hurry with the deaths and get over them. Janet died, too. She was not dear like Marjory. She was very cross and ill-tempered. But then she was the housekeeper and had so much to worry her.

"There were nineteen candles for poor Janet.

"Then only Christine was left of the girls. Christine was not a true Wicklow. They were thin-featured and blond-haired and cold! But she was like a gipsy. Such a lot of tangled black hair that shook into an untidy mass over her brown cheeks, and very brown eyes that seemed black, too, and a scarlet mouth. And so glad to be alive that she skipped and sang all day and never bothered about anything. She loved to ride bareback, and when she couldn't get a horse she would ride one of the three cows—anything just to be riding.

"And singing! There was an old battered spinet in the house, and she could really make music from it. And she would sing queer little songs that some sprite put into her head about princes and castles and love-making in rose gardens and—but they did not care for that—the Wicklows. They thought only about being the last of

their line and being buried in the chapel where no Manningault could lie.

"But Christine loved life and all things that lived, and she loved to wander off among the daisies on the hills and the poppies bursting into crimson bloom. Then she would twist her little gipsy self into queer dancing shapes and sing as loudly as she wished, for there would be no one to complain. And when she had sung and danced until she was tired she would throw herself down amid the grass and the sweet-smelling clover and thank God for a beautiful world.

"It was one day when she sang and picked blackberries, dancing from one bush to another, that she met the blue-eyed boy. Christine had never seen a boy like that. He was so clean, and his collar was so white and his nails so nice, and he took off his cap to her with so grand a flourish!

"He was very little older than Christine. But he had been to boarding-school and had spent his holidays in the great city beyond; and sat in restaurants where famous people ate their meals, and seen all the great actors and singers and even knew some to speak to. And as he told her of all these things, Christine's gipsy eyes grew big and her scarlet mouth opened wide, and he said she was his beautiful wild flower and caught her in his arms and kissed her.

"And Christine went home, her eyes still big at the great new happiness that had come into her life.

"But the boy was a Manningault, and she knew she must be careful and never let her father know, or he would not let her meet this princely young lover. But every day she slipped off, even if for a very short while, and met him in the woods. And now she grew to be a different Christine. She made herself very neat and wore white collars that she washed and ironed herself, and arranged her tangled black hair into ringlets and tied them with red ribbon. And out there in the woods she sang for him, and told him of her queer fancies, and he listened very solemnly and told her she was wonderful. And then he would recount to her more of the great

singers he had seen and about whom she was never tired of listening. And he would compare his love for her with the great love stories of the operas and the plays, and, wicked boy! I am afraid that many of the beautiful things he said to her were stolen from those same love stories.

"And so it went on for more than two months, and both were very happy. But at the end of that time his father decided to send him to school in Germany, where he would remain two years and not come back for his holidays.

"Two years! Can you imagine two years of separation from the one person in all the world that you love? Christine couldn't. She had been prepared for the months that must pass until the Christmas holidays. But two years—!

"And the days dragged themselves on until it was finally the last one before he was to go. And then Christine had a wonderful thought. He was going alone to the city. There would be no one to see him aboard ship. His father could not go; his mother was ill. There would be only a servant. And so she spoke of it. And he glimpsed a glorious twenty-four hours alone with her in the great city. And maybe he was a little selfish and unthinking. But he imagined no one would know. And together they prepared a story to explain her absence to her people. It was neither ingenious nor interesting. But to their young minds it appeared credible.

"She was only seventeen, the little Christine!

"Dear poet, you must not think her a bad girl. She was just young, with a gipsy soul, and she loved the beautiful boy and thought only of being alone with him for a glorious twenty-four hours—a memory that would keep green during his long absence. For, when he returned, they were to be married! He would be old enough then and wise enough to brave the great world for her sake and care nothing at all for what his cruel parents might say. And she was to wait for him and think only of him!

"No doubt he meant it all, poet.

He was a clean boy, a good boy, as boys go. And both were very young and very conscious of the joy of living, and apt to believe the future would make no alteration in their great love for one another—their pagan, oak-grove, nature-worshiping love! Merciful Mother! life is very sweet when one is young and in love!

"But of their going—

"They went early on a starlit morning—the morning express from the north. They thought themselves quite clever! His father accompanied him to the station, and the boy did not appear to know Christine! She was hooded and cloaked, and she slipped on like a little gray sprite!

"Then began the twenty-four glorious hours, and they did not end until early the next morning, when she stood on the dock and waved him a tear-stained handkerchief until the great steamer faded from sight.

"And then, with her ticket, she boarded the train for home. But she did not know, poor little Christine, that there had been those who had seen her meet the beautiful boy in the forest, and one of them a person who had seen both take that train in the early morning; one malicious, who bore the proud old father a grudge, and who carried him a tale that by humbling that pride would even his score.

"The home-coming! Dear poet, you shall soon know why it is I hate candles. And perhaps you will never play sad music again when I am here—

"It was dark that night, and frosty; dim blue above and white under feet, with the stars little frozen eyes and the bare black trees like skeletons. And when she came to the base of the hill, she saw lights in the chapel.

"Lights!

"That could mean but one thing—candles for the dead! For the moment she was as frozen as the ground. Someone dead! Then she asked herself how that might be. One could not die and be buried and have candles burning for him all in twenty-four hours!

"The tears were very warm on her cold face, poet, when she thought that

while she had been so happy another of those poor, sad ones in the lodge-keeper's house had gone into that great gloomy vault without even a look from her. She would remain in the chapel all night and pray, pray for forgiveness.

"And who, who could it be?"

"But she remembered that by the number of candles she would know; and so she pushed open the door of the chapel very softly, for she knew the custom and expected that someone would be kneeling there praying for the poor, lonely one in the vault.

"It was all dark and shadowy within, save for the flickering candles before the Merciful Mother at the shrine. And no one knelt to pray for the soul that was gone!

"She did not understand.

"Never before had there been a Wicklow to die without those to pray before the candles. And at first she was afraid, thinking of evil spirits. Then slowly she tiptoed to the shrine.

"There were not many candles. Her father still lived, then. There were too many for little Lovejoy, who was only nine. Could it be Cecil?"

"She closed her eyes. She did not want to know at once. And her face was warm with a gush of tears as she prayed for forgiveness. Somehow, her happiness seemed a crime—a terrible thing to have been hers, when one of her kin had gone the sad way of the hopeless.

"And when she had prayed, she opened her eyes and counted. And the tears seemed to freeze upon her face.

"There were seventeen candles!

"She did not understand how it had happened, but she knew that she might never return to her home! She might not argue, nor plead, nor lie. She was a Wicklow, and, because of the custom, candles had been burned for her soul. But it was a lost soul and no one had come to pray for it.

"Poet, she was only a child.

"Perhaps it was a long time before she understood the brutal finality of those seventeen white tapers with the golden tongues waving above them. But, understanding, she remembered herself a Wicklow, remembered that none before had died who had not had prayers said for the soul. And since Christine was dead, she, a Wicklow, knelt and prayed for the poor soul that the others had believed lost and had left to the stern justice of the merciless God they worshiped.

"And when she had prayed for an hour, as was the custom, she went out of the chapel, leaving the seventeen candles burning for the child Christine that was dead behind her; and a woman new-born, turned her face to the city.

"And so, dear poet, I do not like candles—and I would not have you play your 'Träumerei' again. God and the masters have said I shall sing sad music—but my friends shall make me gay. And that I may forget the long ago, and the child Christine, dead back there in the chapel—play me the 'Faust' ballet music, and then I will sing you a little laughing song before I say good night."

THE REASON

"**M**EN worry more than women."
 "Yes; they not only have everything to worry about that women have, but they also have the women to worry about, too."

CONSEQUENCES

By LEIGH GORDON GILTNER

AS their eyes met in a casual glance across the width of the parquet, Landis was conscious of something vaguely akin to recognition, though the carefully cultivated faculty for correlating facts and faces which had stood him in such stead in his profession made him instantly aware that he had never seen her until that moment.

The face of the girl in the lower left-hand box was indeed of a type too unusual to be readily forgotten. It was a singular, a striking face—a face inevitably to compel and hold the eye. Its charm—and the charm was indisputable—was due, Landis decided, to its extreme mobility, its instant reflection of each subtlest shade of feeling running the gamut with her varying mood from positive plainness to potential beauty.

The girl, herself, was too striking to admit of even momentary effacement; some impalpable, indefinable quality distinguished her. Landis guessed intuitively that she was accustomed to attract attention. That she resented this was equally conceivable, for a subtle change in her expression as her eyes, sweeping the orchestra circle in a careless glance, again encountered his, made him sharply conscious that he had been staring at her with a fixity amounting to rudeness.

"Roger"—he became presently aware of his wife's voice with a slight accentuation of its habitually querulous tone—"what can you be thinking of tonight? I've spoken to you twice and you haven't even heard me!"

He turned contritely.

"I beg your pardon, Lilian. I beg

your pardon, really. I don't think I heard you speak—"

"That was quite evident—and most unlike you, Roger," she protested petulantly, clearly unaware that the protest was in itself a tribute.

"I'm very sorry," he answered gently. "What was it, dear?"

"I only asked," the fretful voice repeated, "if you chanced to know the people in the first box. They must be strangers in the city—I don't seem to recall them."

"Nor I. I think, as you suggest, they must be visitors from the outside."

The wife, a fragile creature of nerves and moods, having attained the unremitting attention which, with the selfishness of suffering, she habitually exacted of her husband, leaned languidly back in her place, her interest in the subject entirely gone. But her query found a lingering echo in Landis's consciousness. Who were they?—or rather who was she, this girl with the strange, somber face, which had somehow so impressed itself upon his mental retina that he saw her with almost startling distinctness, even when the house went dark and the play began?

It was during the interval between the first and second acts that the question was answered for him.

"Which d'ye mean, Churchill?" came in the carefully cultivated drawl of Worthing, clubman and cotillion leader, who had the orchestra chair immediately behind Landis. "Oh, the girl in the first box! I don't know her personally, though I've often seen her. She's a Miss Falconer, from some unheard-of hamlet somewhere in the interior of the State. Visits the Fieldings, who

vegetate in the suburbs. That's Fielding beside her; Mrs. Fielding's the blond in gray. Don't know the rest of the party."

The other man's comment was inaudible.

"Beautiful?" Worthing echoed. "Well, I'm not sure. Sometimes she strikes me as positively plain, and again she quite dazzles me. She's striking, certainly. I shouldn't mind meeting her; she rather interests me."

Instinctively, Landis glanced at the girl whom Worthing had honored with his distinguished approval, and again, by some chance, his eyes encountered hers. Again Landis felt himself convicted of unpardonable rudeness, though she had repressed any outward sign of annoyance. He was at once disconcerted and perplexed. During all the years since his marriage his wife had been his sole interest outside his career. She had been the love of his youth, the pride and, later, the care of his manhood; and so all-engrossing had been his feeling for her that it had absorbed his whole being. When Lilian, always frail, had become a confirmed invalid he had accepted the change in no martyr spirit, deeming the care her weakness entailed upon him rather a privilege than a burden.

It had never occurred to him to contrast her with others younger and fairer. It did not occur to him now. He made no attempt to analyze the singular attraction which, despite his efforts, drew his gaze inevitably toward Victorine Falconer. He was conscious only of a puzzling sense of having previously known her, either in fact or fancy, and of a strange prescience that she was destined somehow to become a factor in his future. When at the fall of the curtain he found himself close beside her in the throng a swift, inexplicable rush of emotion shook and shocked him. At close range she was vividly beautiful—a fact which, he sternly assured himself, could have no meaning for him. Yet, even as he denied, he felt its potency.

He saw her frequently in the course of the ensuing fortnight. Twice he

met her face to face on the street, and each encounter but confirmed his earlier judgment. She was beautiful, with a beauty quite independent of contour or coloring; a beauty too subtle, too impalpable to be defined. Once he heard her speak, and her vibrant voice stirred him as her face had done.

The situation defied analysis. It was inconceivable to Landis that he should be even vaguely moved by an occasional chance encounter with this girl whom he had never met; and yet more inexplicable that the singular prescience that she was destined somehow to influence his future should grow upon him with each meeting.

Even when she had passed, for the time, from his life, the singular impression he had felt concerning her lingered, obsessing him with a force and persistence which no power of will could enable him to combat, until there came a shock which drove from his mind every thought save one. Lilian Landis died with a suddenness all the more shocking because her malady had been so insidious in its advance.

Landis's desolation was absolute. His thought of his wife had been so wrought with his every hope, plan and aspiration that without her he felt himself hopelessly adrift. The loving care and service he had so long given as a free-will offering had become the main-spring of his existence; he missed the clinging dependence which had been the spur to a devotion which had never failed. Life was a void, his career a purposeless thing.

Then, suddenly, across the blank of his despair struck a poignant thought. A half-formed fancy resolved itself into a fact; a prescience proved prophetic in fulfilment.

Chapter Two

"I DON'T know—I am not quite sure—"

"If I might induce you to give me the benefit of the doubt—"

"For example?"

"Since, as you say, you're not quite sure of yourself, suppose we forestall your conclusion. During the months since we met I flatter myself we've been the best of friends and comrades. Can't we continue comrades indefinitely? I'm a desperately lonely man, Miss Falconer; my home is a 'house desolate' indeed; my life is appallingly empty. I wonder if you'd be willing to take my name, to give me the companionship I crave? I don't ask for more—I realize my boldness in asking so much. I'm afraid your professed uncertainty was a concession to courtesy. I'm perfectly aware that you don't love me; there's small reason why you should. I never posed as an Adonis in my youth, and I'm no longer young—forty-three past, to be exact. But I'm foolish enough to flatter myself with the hope that you may perhaps in time learn to love me—"

"And if I should not?"

"The risk is mine. The one contingency for which I'm not prepared is that you should come to care for someone else."

"A contingency scarcely worth considering. But I'm not sure that I quite understand—"

"I mean, simply, that I want your presence to brighten the great, gloomy barrack I call home. Should you consent, your wishes shall be always my first consideration. I shall not in any way attempt to limit your freedom; you shall be sovereign absolute in your own domain, upon which I shall not intrude. I pledge myself not to annoy you with protestations or demonstrations of devotion. I shall ask nothing more at your hands than you are ready to give."

A question rose to Victorine's lips, but she suppressed it. Surely sentiment had no place in the matter.

"I understand," she said quietly. "But I can't feel that the bargain's a fair one. You've so much to offer, I so little to give."

"That little contents me quite."

"You are most generous; and, frankly, your offer tempts me. I'm so utterly alone; I've drifted since my

childhood; I never knew a home, and that which you offer me seems a veritable haven. I think we should continue friends; I should do my utmost to make your home all you would have it, but more than this I cannot promise."

"More than this I do not ask. I shall count myself fortunate with so much. But there are two questions which I must ask in justice to you and to myself. I want you to tell me—don't spare my vanity!—if I'm personally distasteful to you, if you feel any actual dislike or repugnance for me?"

The girl involuntarily recalled having once heard a woman characterize Roger Landis as the homeliest man she ever met, but the most charming. At the time Victorine had carelessly conceded the equal accuracy of either judgment, but it was the former which now obtruded itself upon her. He was homely, certainly. Yet, withal, his was a strong, kindly, honest face, a face that men liked instinctively and that women found not wholly unattractive, despite its rugged plainness. Victorine sighed inwardly; all the old pagan passion for beauty that lurks in every woman's nature was in her intensified; yet she was wise enough to recognize Roger Landis at his true worth, and when she spoke her answer was absolutely straightforward and sincere.

"On the contrary, I like you very much, Colonel Landis. You interest me keenly; you stimulate my intelligence; I feel myself always at my best in your presence, and I'm proud to be asked to share a name and a career like yours. But I'm guiltily conscious that you're getting the worst of our bargain, and I feel it my duty to offer a friendly warning."

"Which, as is usual with warnings, will be wasted. But," and again his face grew grave, "there is something more. Please be quite frank with me, Victorine. There is—pardon my asking—there is no one else?"

The girl's face flushed a sudden crimson, then went very white. There was

a moment of tense silence. Then she lifted her eyes and met his squarely.

"No," she said quietly. "There is no one—now."

"There *was* someone? I beg your pardon. I have no right to ask."

"You have every right. There was someone, someone for whom I cared very deeply; but it's all of the past. A mere episode, a girlish fancy, scarcely worth mentioning perhaps, but you wished me to be frank."

"Thank you. Then I may hope that you will do me the honor to become my wife?"

"If you wish it, yes."

"If I could make you understand how much I wish it—"

Victorine smiled a little wearily.

"Like Juliet, 'I have no joy in this contract tonight,' though on slightly different grounds. I can't feel sure that I'm not doing injustice to both myself and you; yet, perhaps, after all, there's a better chance for happiness in a marriage based on friendship and congeniality than on sentiment alone. Love's rather a disturbing element, I'm told." Then with a swift change of tone, "Roger" (she spoke his name unconsciously in her earnestness), "are you sure that this is wise? Is it quite just to you? Are you content to marry a woman who does not love you, who perhaps never may?"

Landis took her hands in a firm, friendly clasp.

"Dear," he said very gently, "I can't think of a greater possible happiness than that you should marry me with or without love. If you should ever come to care for me, I should count myself the most fortunate of men. Should that never be, I should still count myself fortunate in a comradeship I value more than the love of another woman."

Chapter Three

It was the day on which Landis brought home his bride had been ordered in her honor it could not have been more perfect. It was a day in late October,

when there was yet a hint of summer in the air and in the warm gold of the afternoon sunshine which lingered on the massive old stone mansion before which the carriage stopped. The house had been erected by Landis's grandfather seventy years earlier, when the now thriving Kentucky city had been little more than a village, but the town had been built up to and around it till it now stood in the heart of a fashionable square. Yet the vast lawn, with its wealth of shrub and vine and giant forest trees, held it effectually isolated. The mansion itself, with its massive stone steps and many-columned portico, was the veritable home of Victorine's dreams; and Landis, glancing down at her, read her rapture in her eyes.

"Roger," she breathed ecstatically, "it's too perfect to be true!"

Just within the great hall stood waiting to greet the new mistress the retainers of the house—the one touch needful to complete the picture. Melchisedek, the butler, his ebony skin brought into bold relief by contrast with the snowy tufts of wool on either side of his wrinkled face; his wife, Aunt Dulcie, the cook, fat, black and panoplied with a somewhat surly dignity; and, in sharp contrast with this quaint pair of antiques, Rosetta, the maid, sufficiently modern and up to date.

Like one in a dream, Victorine followed her husband into the drawing-room with its massive old-fashioned furniture and fine Jouett portraits of the Landis ancestry; caught a glimpse through the open folding-doors of the dining-room, the polished mahogany table, gay with golden chrysanthemums and flanked by tall silver candlesticks holding yellow-shaded candles; passed across the hall into the library and up the broad stairway to the room which was to be her own. As Landis threw open the door, Victorine could not repress a cry of delight. She had asked that nothing about the house should be changed, and with this one exception Landis had deferred to her wish.

"I couldn't quite bring myself to leave this as it was," he explained. "I wanted you to have this room because of its southern exposure; but the prevailing tone was a depressing gray-green, calculated to produce *mal de mer*, or melancholia, so, recalling your fondness for rose, I had the decorator develop it in that tint. If there's anything you wish altered, please don't hesitate to say so."

Victorine glanced in wordless ecstasy about the room, a perfect symphony in rose and gold, with no slightest jarring note.

"Roger," she began breathlessly at last, "I can't thank you—"

"Don't try, dear. It was my pleasure." He crossed the room, unlocked and threw wide an inner door. "If you'd care to see my own highly artistic apartment." The contrast was of the sharpest. The big, bare room—a man's room it instantly proclaimed itself by the absence of any attempt at ornamentation—was ascetic in its plainness.

"My tastes are not luxurious, you see," he said smiling. "But I think we must dress for dinner. Dulcie's rather a martinet and it's unwise to keep her waiting." He stepped back with her across the threshold, locking the connecting door as before.

"I hope you won't mind having me so near"—he spoke with an effect of carelessness; "it seemed the one possible arrangement."

"I shall not mind in the least." Then, as he crossed to the outer door:

"Roger," she said, "I can't let you go without telling you how perfect it all seems to me. It's the home I've dreamed of, but never hoped to possess. I wish I could thank you for giving it to me."

"It is rather I who should thank you for giving the home its mistress," he answered. He took the hand she held out to him and lifted it to his lips. For a period of fifteen years his life had moved in a sluggish current of content; but during all those years he had never experienced one moment of such poignant rapture as stirred within him at

each recurrent realization that this vivid, beautiful creature was his.

"I'm afraid you're in for a stupid evening," Landis apologized, after dinner, as they entered the library, lighted only by the gleam of an open fire. "There's nothing on at the theaters as yet, and our friends will hesitate to intrude so early in the honeymoon, so I fear you must put up with my inspiring society—"

Victorine smiled brightly up at him.

"It's you who should be commiserated. A woman takes naturally to the ingle nook; but the average man hates being pent up for one of those long, lovely, fireside evenings the domestic monthlies descant upon. You'll stand it valiantly for a while; then you'll grow restive."

She crossed to the piano. She played merely fragments, but she played with taste and feeling. Her voice was a cultivated contralto, not powerful, but wonderfully sweet and appealing, and Landis, listening, felt a growing pride of possession in this creature of infinite variety of mood and accomplishment.

The evening passed swiftly for both. They were admirably adapted to each other in many ways; their tastes were congenial, and fortunately both possessed that saving sense of humor which is the most effective lubricant for the friction of daily life.

"You really deserve commendation," Victorine asserted as at length she rose. "I've watched you narrowly all evening and haven't detected a single yawn. I'm encouraged to believe that you're going to turn out one of those model husbands we read about—though perhaps it's a trifle early as yet to expect you to begin to throw things at me. But it's really very late, so if you'll excuse me I shall say good night."

They ascended the stairs together. In the corridor above, Victorine paused with one of her swift, luminous smiles.

"Good night," she said; "I've had the happiest home-coming imaginable."

Moved by a sudden impulse, he bent and touched her brow with his lips.

Chapter Four

It was with no small degree of trepidation that the new mistress of the mansion summoned the august Aunt Dulcie to her presence on the first day of her own incumbency.

"Aunt Dulcie," she faltered, "can you tell me—is there a portrait—of—of the first Mrs. Landis in the house?"

The old negress turned upon her with an aggressive snap of her beady black eyes.

"Yes'm. Dey is dat! Two ub 'em—packed away out of sight. 'Peahs lak dey's no place foh 'em—now!" A wrathful snort gave point to the final adverb.

"I wish to have them placed as they were—before—before I came. Will you get them, please, and show me where they hung?"

Aunt Dulcie's eyes rolled wildly under the stress of conflicting emotions.

"Foh de Lawd's sake, 'Chisedek," she confided to her spouse in the privacy of the butler's pantry. "De new mistis done ask foh Miss Lily's pictuhs and 'low she gwine hang dem whar dey 'long. Whut you reckon Marse Rogeh gwine say to dat?"

Melchisedek's imaginative powers had been impaired by long repression.

"Lawd knows!" he murmured piously, shifting the responsibility to a higher power. "Apt as not he won't say nuffin. She done got him hypnotized!"

A little later, carefully unswathed by Dulcie's own hands, two life-size portraits in oils revealed themselves to Victorine's eager eyes. Both were executed with exquisite sympathy and skill. In the one, wrought in the first flush of Lilian Landis's fresh young loveliness, the painter had dwelt *con amore* on each detail of her delicate, blond beauty, revealing in each soft curve, symbolizing the spirit of virginal freshness until it might have stood for a study of youth and April hope; while,

in the other and later presentment, he had somehow managed to embody the elusive appeal of a waning beauty upon which approaching dissolution had already set its seal that Victorine's lashes grew wet as she gazed—a tribute infinitely grateful to the jealous eyes fixed watchfully upon her.

"Oh," the girl breathed, "I am so glad she was like that! She was beautiful, beautiful!"

Then from out the background where Aunt Dulcie stood, her hands on her portly hips, her keen glance turning from the portraits to the vivid creature of flesh and blood before them, came, in a voice husky with emotion, an unexpected concession:

"She wan't no beautifuller dan what you is, chile! Lawd knows I loved Miss Lily, but dat ain't no reason why I cain't see froo de eye ub a needle, as de Scriptuh says. She couldn't hold a candle to you foh looks—and I reckon dey's othehs 'sides me thinks de same!" Aunt Dulcie had capitulated. Within an hour the portraits hung in their wonted places, the one in the drawing-room, the other in Landis's own apartment, and two feminine callers who chanced in that afternoon privately assured each other of their gratification that Colonel Landis hadn't "let a foolish consideration for his second wife banish poor Lilian's portrait." Landis, himself, owing to matters requiring his personal attention, had lunched down town; but at the end of the day he turned his steps homeward with an eagerness at which he was too much absorbed to smile.

He was conscious of a keen sense of disappointment when, glancing past Melchisedek, who opened the door to him, he failed to spy the figure which had been all day before his mental vision. As he turned impatiently to the drawing-room, his eyes fell suddenly—not upon the vivid, laughing face they sought, but on the beautiful, pictured presentment of his dead wife. The eyes seemed to meet his gaze, half reproachfully, half tenderly. The shock was like a sudden blow. He paused abruptly; a line carved itself

between his brows. Was it a reminder, a rebuke?

There was a light step in the hall and he turned to see Victorine in the doorway.

"What a bad beginning!" she cried, advancing. "I'd planned to always meet you with a smile, and I waited around for ages with the first instalment in readiness, but you were a little late, so I strolled out among the flowers and—missed you."

One glance into the frank eyes she lifted to his proved illuminative. Landis's face cleared.

"I hope you won't mind—about the portrait, Roger," she said a little tremulously. "It was so beautiful, so more than beautiful, that I couldn't bear to think of it shut away in darkness because of me. Oh, I know it was consideration that prompted it, but believe me, Roger, I wouldn't have it so. She was your wife, the wife you loved and who loved you, and hers is the prior right." Landis glanced down at the fair face lifted pleadingly to his. An almost overmastering impulse of yearning tenderness moved him, but allegiance to the letter of his bond held him dumb while he struggled for control.

"Roger!" she cried, misinterpreting his silence, "have I hurt you unpardonably? Won't you try to forgive me?"

He was smiling, though his lips were a little pale.

"Forgive you?" he said, and his tone was eloquent. "Dear child, I'm grateful with all my heart."

Chapter Five

THE weeks which ensued were to Landis a revelation as to what a true *camaraderie* between a man and a woman might mean. Lilian had been to him, at first, a pet and a plaything; later, a constant care; always an idol but never a companion in the sense that Victorine had already become. She entered into his pursuits and interests enthusiastically, but never intrusively; he came and went at will, untrammelled, unquestioned; and this, to a man long

used to the relentless tyranny of weakness, was in itself a boon.

Victorine, on her part, found a certain pleasure in the prestige Landis's position involved; in the stately old home with the life histories of the Landis ancestry running through its halls; and, more than all, in her husband's eminence in his profession. An attorney for the Commonwealth, he was constantly in the public gaze, and his name had become synonymous with uncompromising honesty and fidelity to duty. Victorine's respect and admiration for her husband increased with her daily experience of his unfailing courtesy and consideration and her growing knowledge of the high esteem in which he was generally held.

Landis, meanwhile, kept his pledge rigidly, so rigidly indeed that Victorine's unasked question seemed to answer itself. She could not know that with the passing of each day platonic seemed to grow less possible to him; that he felt that his one safeguard lay in holding fast to the letter of his bond. She was singularly devoid of petty, personal vanity, and, as is usual with preconceived ideas, her theory that Landis had married her on a basis of friendly liking alone, while his heart was irrevocably Lilian's, did not lack for confirmation.

When, on Christmas morning, she had found beside her plate a costly bauble she coveted, a swift rush of gratitude swept her across the room to his side. She had never before proffered a caress, even of the slightest; she did so now on the moment's impulse. But as she inclined her face to his, Landis, white to the lips, had put her from him.

"Please don't," he said sharply, his voice harsh and strained. "I'm not given to bribery. I'm compensated if the trifle pleases you. I won't buy your kisses."

For an instant Victorine winced; the affront to her sensitive pride stung her keenly. But she was that rarest of beings, a reasonable woman; and reason instantly reminded her of the nature of their bond. They were

friends, nothing more, and into their friendship no question of sentiment need enter. The arrow that would have pierced a fonder heart glanced harmlessly from her armor of indifference.

"As you please, Roger," she said, and her tone was guiltless of bitterness or anger. "Far be it from me to penalize generosity!"

Life flowed on in its wonted even current. Victorine troubled herself with no rankling sense of slight; she cherished no childish resentment or rancor. She was a singularly sane and normal being, and when her husband one day found occasion to characterize her as the most inspiredly sensible woman of his acquaintance, he did her no more than justice.

It chanced on that particular day that, having an appointment with a friend from a neighboring city, Landis announced his intention of taking him to luncheon down town, where they might discuss a menu and a matter of business simultaneously. It also chanced that Harding missed his train. It further befell that just as Landis was on the point of telephoning Victorine of his change of plan, Mrs. Ellerslie dropped in to seek expert advice on a business matter. Mrs. Ellerslie was of a type sufficiently common—the dashing divorcée, clinging tenaciously to the fringe of society's mantle, a target for the slings and arrows of feminine disapproval, which, it must be admitted, her none too rigid interpretation of the proprieties invited. She was distinctly obnoxious to her attorney, whose inherent courtesy prompted a perfunctory cordiality upon which she promptly presumed. Before he quite realized her intent, he found himself dazedly talking trivialities to Floy Ellerslie across a table in the café to which he had planned to take Harding. He was just ordering when, chancing to lift his eyes, he met squarely those of his wife, who had risen from an adjacent table and was being helped into her wrap by an obsequious waiter. Victorine smiled in the frankest and friendliest manner, pausing as she passed

out to greet Mrs. Ellerslie with a cordiality to which that lady was scarcely accustomed from her own sex, and to explain her presence to her husband. Her manner was easy, natural and unconstrained; her treatment of the situation perfect.

Landis's wonted aplomb had utterly deserted him; his manner during the brief encounter was conscious and constrained. He felt that he had placed himself in a hopelessly false position. Explanation, as exaggerating the importance of the incident, could but make matters worse. And how could he explain? He could scarcely shield himself at the expense of a woman, even a woman who had not hesitated to place herself and him in so equivocal a situation.

But it was Victorine herself who set the matter straight in the simplest possible way.

"Mr. Harding failed to come this morning?" she queried casually at dinner that evening.

"Yes. He wired that he'd missed his train."

"Thus leaving you open to other engagements!" Victorine dimpled mischievously. "I quite sympathized with you this morning, Roger. I grasped the situation the moment you entered the café. Mrs. Ellerslie's methods are not of the subtlest. Hers is too familiar a type—the feminine Ishmael, whose hand is against every woman, since every woman's hand is against her. But my sympathies today were all with you, Roger. Your cat-that-ate-the-canary expression almost upset my gravity."

Landis laughed, relieved.

"Then you quite understood?"

"Quite. You can't fancy, Roger, that I could suspect you of—of episodes à la Ellerslie; though, even so, I should scarcely feel at liberty to protest. The rights of *camaraderie* have their limits."

Landis winced sharply.

"Victorine," he began in an odd, choked voice, "Victorine, is it possible you don't realize—" He checked himself abruptly and then concluded

in an altered tone: "May I be permitted to pronounce you the most preternaturally sensible and angelically rational woman I know?"

"I accept the tribute," Victorine returned cryptically, "in the spirit in which it is offered."

Chapter Six

ONE midnight, perhaps a fortnight later, Landis, brooding beside the dying embers on his hearth, became gradually conscious that Victorine also kept vigil. The walls of the old house were thick, but his senses, always acutely alive as to her, made him presently aware that she was moving restlessly, ceaselessly about the adjoining apartment. He wondered anxiously if she might be ill. Loath to intrude upon her, yet unable to endure the thought that she might be dragging out the night watches in pain and alone, he crossed to the connecting doorway and spoke her name.

"Victorine," he ventured, "are you ill?"

"A slight headache only," came the answer. "It will soon pass, I think."

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing, thank you. I shall be better soon."

"But I can't stand idly by and let you suffer. It seems positively inhuman—"

Unconsciously he bent his weight against the door. To his utter surprise and dismay, it yielded to his touch and swung slowly wide. For the first time since the night of their home-coming, he found himself upon the threshold of his wife's room.

"I—I beg your—pardon," he stammered; "I assure you I had not meant to intrude—but the door by some chance was unlocked—"

"As always," Victorine interpolated simply. The look with which she met the question of his glance was a tribute. Landis went a trifle pale.

"Thank you," he said quietly, "but—oblige me, please!" He turned the key sharply and laid it in Victorine's

desk. Then he crossed to her side and stood for a moment looking down at her. Her beauty's appeal to him had never been more potent. "I feel that I can't apologize sufficiently for this intrusion"—Landis, with his eyes on her face, was scarcely conscious of what he was saying—"but since I'm here, perhaps you'll let me be of some slight service?" Even as he spoke, a memory of the unlimited coddling Lilian's least illness had involved, as contrasted with this woman's quiet strength and endurance, almost made him smile. He could scarcely imagine taking Victorine into his arms, drawing her head against his breast, soothing her like a fretful child, as had been his wont with Lilian; yet, even in its negation, the thought thrilled him.

"There is nothing, thank you," he heard Victorine reply, "or—yes. Since you are here, may I speak of something I had meant to tell you tomorrow? Are you too tired to play 'wedding guest' to my 'ancient mariner'?" He shook his head silently and took the chair she indicated. His heart was beating thickly; her nearness, as always, stirred him strongly.

"You may remember," she began quietly, "that I mentioned, the night of our betrothal, the inevitable 'other man.' I should have told you the story then—only there was so little, so pathetically little, to tell. There is more now.

"I met him years ago when I was studying in New York," she pursued slowly. "I was the crudest of young creatures and he was already beginning to be famous. Ah, you may be sure I felt my insignificance—the earthen vessel and the star—though he hadn't then attained stellar eminence. In my saner moments I realized that there was no faintest possibility of his ever loving me—yet there were other moments when I somehow fancied that he cared a little, though he never by word or look gave me the right to be sure. At last, in a foolish panic lest he should guess the truth and pity me, I gave up my dream of a career and went home. He wrote at once—just a few courteous, formal words; later he wrote

again to congratulate me on some small success; but I dared not reply to either lest he should read between the lines. After that. . . silence . . . that was all, Roger. Little enough, was it not? Yet enough somehow to stand between me and the love of any other man. There were times—many of them—when I was tempted to sacrifice my ideal to a crass reality. But, Roger, when the test came, I couldn't. Your proffered comradeship seemed a sort of compromise. If you had asked or offered love, I should not have married you. I couldn't have been so false to myself and a love which meant so much to me—though I did not know then that he loved me in return, I know now."

Landis's face did not change. The impassivity of expression he had cultivated stood him in good stead.

"There came to me today a letter forwarded from home. He wrote from abroad—he had not heard of my marriage. It was only a line to ask that he might come to tell me, as he had not had the right to tell me before, that he loved me. Inclosed was a brief notice of the death of his wife in a private London sanatorium. She had been hopelessly insane for years. Few knew of her existence—I least of all—but it was this which had held him silent."

"And your answer?"

"There could be but one. No, don't look at me so—don't pity me, Roger! I'm happier than ever before in my life. If you guessed what it meant to me to know that I hadn't given my heart unsought!"

"Victorine"—Landis spoke very quietly—"if I should offer you your freedom—"

"I should refuse to accept it. I'm primitive and unmodern enough to interpret literally 'till death do us part.' Don't misunderstand, dear. I'm not assuming the martyr pose. I tell you in all sincerity, Roger, that the months we've been together are the happiest I have ever known. You've been so more than kind to me! Perhaps, after all, the peace and calm of a friendship like ours is preferable to the storm and stress of a great passion. Don't you

see, dear, that I've told you this simply because I wished to have no secret from you? It's a closed incident—a thing forever done with."

"And the man you love—"

"Will forget in time. It's a habit men have, I'm told."

"But if I refuse to let you sacrifice your happiness and his?"

"There's no question of sacrifice, Roger. We are on equal terms, you and I. If I am to be pitied, isn't it equally hard that you must content yourself with a loveless wife, when you deserve the best that I or any other could give? Look at the matter sanely, Roger. That this letter came too late is an accident of fate. It need make no difference. Let's put it all aside and go on as before."

Landis stood for a moment looking down at her. He could almost have smiled at the unconscious irony of her assumption of his indifference, when he knew that he loved her with the one great passion of his life.

"As you will," he said at last. "But promise me, Victorine, that if the time should ever come when you want your freedom, you will not hesitate to take it."

Victorine held out her hand. "I promise," she said.

Chapter Seven

THE telephone rang sharply. Victorine, passing at the moment, herself answered the call.

"Victorine," came in her husband's voice, "I've taken the liberty of asking an old friend—a classmate of mine at college—to dine with us this evening. I hope this won't inconvenience you at all . . . Thank you . . . I think you'll like Barry—Barrington of the All-Star Cast—ran across him just now in Keller's office. He isn't on in the first scene, so you needn't alter your dinner hour. I sha'n't be home to luncheon, but will try to be on time this evening . . . Thanks again—and good-bye."

Victorine groped her way across the

hall and sank into a chair. Barrington—Barrington of all the world! What perverse freak of fate had brought it to pass that she must perforce receive as her husband's guest the man whom for weeks she had been striving to put out of her life? Should she, could she see him? Would it not be wiser to invent some excuse to spare herself the ordeal? Her pride rose in revolt. The same impulse which had impelled her to consent to join Worthing's box party for the evening, even though she had known that Barrington was in the cast, spurred her to the resolve to accept fate's challenge and meet Barrington as naturally as she might.

Unfortunately, however, achievement is not necessarily predicated of resolve. The calm to which Victorine had rigorously schooled herself failed her utterly when she found herself face to face with Barrington, but little changed since the days when she had known him first. She was conscious, even as her woman's quick percipience showed her its fatuity, that she had secretly been cherishing the hope that Barrington might prove other than she had dreamed. Yet now that he stood before her, she knew that he was all and more than her young fancy had painted him; and, though the regard he bent upon her was gravely decorous, there was not wanting in his eyes that which she had feared, yet hoped, to see.

She had risen at his entrance, and Barrington, with his eyes upon her as she advanced to meet him, knew instantly that there existed nowhere else in all the world another woman who could so adequately and entirely meet every need of his nature.

As she laid her hand in his the carefully chosen phrases which Victorine had formulated fell away from her.

"You—you knew?" she faltered.

"I knew," he answered; "I knew—and yet—forgive me, Victorine, I came."

The actor's control of his emotions had apparently deserted this prince of players. The hand which touched hers was unsteady, as was the voice in

which he spoke. There was an instant's silence, which Barrington broke.

"I came, I ventured to come, because I felt that since you had never loved me it could make no difference to you, while it would mean much to me. It seemed to me that if I could see you in your home, loving and beloved, it would make my own loneliness and loss less difficult to bear. If you could know what the shattering of the dream which sustained me through all those years meant to me . . . Forgive me, I didn't mean to whine. Rather let me tell you how happy I am in your good fortune. Landis is a splendid fellow—more nearly worthy of you than any man I know, and the knowledge of your happiness together will make it less hard . . ." He broke off abruptly. A subtle change, which to eyes less keen than those of this *matinée* idol and man of the world must have been illuminative, had crossed her face. "Victorine," he cried; "Victorine!"

She moved a little away from him. Every vestige of color had died out of her lips and cheek.

"Victorine, it can't be—it isn't possible—"

"Yes," Victorine's voice was very quiet, "it is entirely possible. Since we perhaps may not meet again, let us have the truth. I love you, have loved you from the moment we met; and now that I know that you care for me, my life will be the sweeter for it, though the knowledge comes too late."

Barrington stirred slightly, but she stayed him with a gesture.

"Wait," she said. "In all you have said you are utterly mistaken—in all but one thing—your judgment of Roger. I think I never knew a nobler man. But he does not love me—has never loved me. His whole heart was given to his dead wife, and I am his friend and comrade—nothing more. Had he asked or offered love I could not have become his wife. But he married me knowing that I had loved another man and that I gave him only liking and respect. When your letter

came I told him the facts, withholding only your name. He offered me my freedom, which I refused to accept. Though he doesn't love me, I am his wife."

Barrington covered the space between them at a stride and caught her hands in his.

"Victorine," he cried sharply, "is it possible that after what you have just told me you mean to keep up this ghastly farce? Is it just to you, to me, to Landis even, that you should bear his name when you love me? Don't you see that it's impossible, unspeakable?"

"I am Roger Landis's wife. Nothing can alter that. He could not free me if he chose; I am not even sure that I wish my freedom. I love you, have loved you for years, but, despite the poets, love isn't necessarily eternal. It may be, it must be outlived."

Barrington bent above her till his breath swept her cheek. She trembled a little, but there was no hint of yielding in her pose.

"Dear, dearest!" he cried desperately, "do you realize what you are doing? Can you calmly think of sacrificing yourself and me to a mistaken sense of duty? If Landis loved you I shouldn't be cad enough to urge my claim; since he neither loves you nor you him, it seems fanatical for you to immolate yourself. Let me go to your husband and tell him the truth. Landis is just, above everything, and I believe he will tell you, as I do, that your first duty is to yourself." Victorine shook her head.

"Sophistries," she said; "sophistries with which I can't deceive myself! Believe me, I have made my choice. We will both outlive this passing pain. Love will come to you again in time; meanwhile you have your art, and I have—my husband."

A swift step sounded without. A moment later Landis entered. Something in the smile Victorine turned upon him, some quality of wistfulness, gave Barrington a sudden pang.

"I thought I heard myself officially mentioned as I came in," Landis said

lightly, "but I sha'n't rebuke you for 'speaking evil of dignities'! Sorry to have been late, Barrington, but I'm sure you'll pardon me."

"Mrs. Landis and I are old acquaintances, I find," Barrington made answer. "I had the pleasure of knowing her when she was studying in New York, and she has done me the honor to remember me." He spoke constrainedly, the color flaming into his face. Despite his easy actor's code, he did not like the rôle he was playing. He would have preferred frankly to force the issue; to tell Landis the whole truth and claim the right he felt was his by virtue of a mutual love. His voice trailed off into silence.

And then, because even in great emotional crises the daily uses of life must still go on, they dined together. Landis was, as always, a charming host; Barrington was at his delightful best, and Victorine rose quickly to the occasion. Yet, of the three about the flower-laden board, it would have been difficult to say which was the least at ease.

Chapter Eight

VICTORINE often wondered afterward what extraneous power sustained her through that endless evening. As in a dream she heard herself making conversation with the other members of Worthing's box party, or parrying the florid compliments of Worthing himself. Through it all a single figure stood out against a blurred background of impressions; she was conscious only of a presence which dominated all else.

Yet, throughout, she was vaguely conscious of a subtle sense of support, of a sustaining aid which had unobtrusively helped her through the ordeal; and when at last the curtain was rung down and Worthing would have carried them all off to supper at the club, it was Landis who somehow contrived to make their excuses and hurry her home. It was not until she found herself in her own drawing-room, feeling as if another moment of the smiling masquerade

must have meant a humiliating breakdown, that she realized fully that it was he who had shielded and sustained her throughout.

"Thank you so very much, Roger," she said wearily. "It was good of you to rescue me. I'm so tired tonight, so utterly out of sorts, that I don't think I could have endured that 'madding crowd' an instant longer."

"I understood," said Landis gently. There was a silence; then he turned and faced her as she drooped before him.

"Dear," he said quietly, "tell me. Was it—is it Barrington?"

She had grown absolutely colorless, but her eyes met his frankly.

"Yes," she said.

"I was quite sure of it—though not until too late to spare you this evening. I think I guessed the moment I saw you together. I have decided on my course. You haven't asked for your freedom, but it is yours. I will see Barrington at once—"

There was a sharp ring at the door. The next instant Barrington himself, white and haggard, entered the room.

"Landis," he said quietly, "I've come to confess myself a cad. I accepted your hospitality tonight when the fact that I loved your wife should have forbidden my coming. But I beg you to believe that I fancied her utterly indifferent to me, and so felt that it could matter neither to you nor to her. But since I find that your marriage is a mere legalized comradeship, since I learn that the woman I love has loved me through all the years since we met, I feel it my right to come to you with the truth and to answer to you in any way you may wish. I feel myself a blackguard to seem to have betrayed your trust; but your wife's happiness, as well as my own, is involved. This means comparatively little to you—a mere matter of pride—while it is everything to me. If you had loved her—"

Victorine lifted her head at the sound of Landis's laugh.

"If I had loved her!" he laughed again, harshly, bitterly. "My God,

Barrington, if I could tell you how I have loved her! I don't think I ever realized the meaning of the word—until she taught me. I loved her enough to want to make her my wife, even without her love; loved her so that I was willing to pledge myself to content my soul with empty husks and keep at least the letter of my bond. I love her enough to give her up—to you!"

Victorine was regarding her husband with wide, startled eyes.

"Roger," she gasped, "is it true? Do you mean—is it possible that you—care?"

Landis's blanched lips smiled.

"Victorine, is it possible that you haven't guessed how desperately I've cared? Haven't you seen how doggedly I've been fighting for strength to keep my promise and retain my self-respect?"

"Landis," Barrington interposed breathlessly, "I give you my word that I didn't dream of this! If I had guessed—"

"That need not trouble you, Barrington," came the quiet response. "I have made my plans regardless of any personal consideration. In your presence I offer my wife her freedom. I promise to use whatever of legal skill I possess to obtain her release without publicity or scandal. It shall be my pleasure to protect her until she is free to become your wife." He held out his hand to his friend. "I concede your right, Barrington. I can't hope to hold what I never possessed. Victorine, you've heard—the decision rests with you."

"May I ask," the girl's voice was quite steady, "if you will, both of you, abide without question or comment by that decision?"

Barrington bowed silently; it was Landis who spoke.

"You have my word," he said.

Victorine stood motionless for a long moment, the two men watching her with breathless intentness.

"My decision is made," she said steadily. "I shall remain with my husband."

Barrington flung up his head with

the gesture of some splendid, wild creature that has received a mortal hurt, yet scorns to betray its pain. Without a word he crossed to where she stood, lifted her hand to his lips and went away.

The pathos of the smile Victorine forced to her lips chilled Landis to a hopelessness more utter than any words could have done. "You've been most generous, Roger," she said gently. "I wish I were worthier of your goodness—and you. Thank you—and good night."

Chapter Nine

WITH what courage and resolution Victorine set herself to banish from her thoughts that which of her own volition she had put out of her life Landis alone knew. He winced often and sharply at the thought that, however unwillingly, he held her a perennial prisoner, standing between her and the happiness that might otherwise have been hers; and he suffered with a sympathetic intensity which Victorine herself would have been the first to pronounce disproportionate.

He threw himself into his work with an ardor born of unrest. It chanced that a particularly notable case was at the moment absorbing his whole attention and attracting the interest of the public at large. A party to a mountain feud, shot from ambush in the Kentucky hills, had been brought for treatment to a hospital in the lowland city of Landis's residence and had there died, thus bringing the case within the jurisdiction of the local court; and Landis, as attorney for the Commonwealth, had sprung into instant prominence by his vigorous conduct of the prosecution.

The case became the topic of the hour throughout the State. The outside press began to interest itself in its details and the dramatic incidents of the trial furnished daily food for the pen of the paragrapher. Throngs of mountain men and women, partisans of either side, the better and the baser element alike, swarmed into the city.

Landis became instantly a marked man; the mountaineers, men of primitive instincts and passions, were not slow to construe professional zeal as personal enmity and to fix upon the striking figure of the prosecuting attorney as a tangible object upon which to vent their smoldering bitterness and hate. Threats, more or less vague, but gradually growing in frequency and intensity, reached Landis's ears. His friends and associates grew uneasy and anxious for his personal safety; but Landis only smiled. There was one way he told himself, whereby Victorine might be freed; perhaps fate had decreed that that way should be opened to her. He was not weakling enough to court this solution deliberately; but if it offered he would meet it unafraid. He knew the men he had to deal with, and he did not underestimate his danger; yet he did not shrink.

Of all this Victorine knew nothing. She was cognizant, with a certain degree of pride, of her husband's active part in the conduct of this now famous case; the daily papers teemed with it and with praise of Landis's prowess; yet, acting upon a hint from Landis himself, all hint of things untoward was suppressed.

Rather to her own surprise, Victorine had found herself able to take up existence much as before. Landis's manner toward her had undergone no perceptible change; his absolute self-effacement had precluded the possibility of revulsion which might otherwise have succeeded renunciation. It was perhaps fortunate that at this juncture she should have been called upon to consider him in a professional, rather than in the personal capacity. His entire absorption in the case in question gave her an opportunity to study him and the situation in perspective, and so to acquire a juster appreciation of value.

Oddly enough, though press and public rated his powers as a speaker exceptionally high, his wife had never heard him. Accordingly, when she learned through the former medium—Landis's assumption of her indifference to his interests had rather piqued her

of late—that he was to make his principal argument in the case on a given evening, she resolved to hear him, if possible, without his knowledge.

She was conscious of a keen sense of nervous tension as she waited while an attorney for the defense droned through a tedious statement. It seemed ages, to her impatience, till she realized that at last Landis was speaking, in a quiet, conversational tone which yet carried to the farthest parts of the room. As he sketched in a few singularly effective words the dark history of the mountain feud of which the crime under consideration was but an incident, Victorine awoke suddenly to the realization that here was such an orator as arises but once in a generation. She wondered that she had never before perceived the possibilities of that wonderful voice, trained to the utmost perfection of modulation and control. As she listened, swept resistlessly along on the tide of an eloquence less flowery than forceful, a swift thrill of pride stirred within her, pride not only in his proven power, but in the knowledge that this man among men had loved her. Her keen perception had taught her to estimate his ability at its proper value, even before the State's most eminent jurist came to her at the close of the day to say:

"A wonderful speech, Mrs. Landis—such a speech as has not been heard in this court since the time of the Great Commoner himself. Your husband is the most magnetic speaker I've heard in years. But I feel a little anxious about him. These mountaineers are a primitive people, incapable of discriminating between professional ardor and personal animus, and if Halleck is convicted there will undoubtedly be much bitterness. Warn your husband to be careful. He is too important a factor in the jurisprudence of the State to take needless chances."

When, a little later, Landis emerged from the court room, he was amazed to find himself face to face with his wife.

"I've been waiting for you, Roger," she said, and his senses, always acutely alive to her subtlest shade of manner,

made him aware of a new quality in her tone. "I came uninvited to hear you speak. It was a great speech, Roger, and I'm very, very proud of you."

Landis laughed lightly, though he had flushed with pleasure at her praise.

"I'm highly flattered, both by your presence and your commendation. I scarcely fancied you'd be interested—"

"But I was. I decided before you'd uttered a hundred words that you were an orator born, and when no less a personage than Judge Herrick confirmed my decision I was quite puffed up with pride!"

She was in the highest spirits during the homeward drive, and Landis responded to her mood. But when their own portal closed upon them, she turned toward him; all the laughter vanished from her lips and eyes.

"Roger," she said in a tone he had never heard her use before, "I'm told that your life is in danger, that there have been threats . . . in the event of Halleck's conviction. May I ask, may I beg that you will run no needless risk for"—she paused an instant, then finished bravely—"for my sake." Before he could answer she had turned and fled up the stairs.

Chapter Ten

WORTHING had been giving a dinner in honor of Colonel and Mrs. Landis, and though Worthing's little dinners had become celebrated in a small way, he was conscious that in this evening's function he had quite surpassed himself.

From the moment of her first appearance on his social horizon, he had made himself Victorine's satellite; and though Landis, accustomed to Worthing's fleeting fancies, which no one ever took seriously, was, as a rule, merely mildly amused by his liking for her, he found himself tonight possessed of a strong sense of irritation at his manner.

Victorine was at her best; and Landis, watching Worthing as he leaned toward her, his eager gaze devouring the gracious curves of lips and cheek

and throat, felt a fierce impulse to strike him full across his smiling face. He remembered once to have heard a man assert that Worthing's every glance at a woman held a covert insult; the memory recurred to him with sickening significance as Worthing's bold eyes drank in each detail of the rich, dark beauty of the woman at his right.

A fierce resentment sprang up within Landis's breast, even while he smiled at the sprightly sallies of the portly dowager he had taken out. Victorine was his by every right, human and divine; yet any one of the dozen men present was scarcely less to her than the man whose name she bore. Fate had played him a cruel trick; had given him shadow for substance, seeming for reality. A tide of impotent yearning swelled within him as he watched his wife, the center throughout the evening of an admiring group; and when at last he found himself alone with her in the carriage, her sweet physical nearness so obsessed him that he answered her gay speeches at random or in monosyllables.

At her own door Victorine paused, a mischievous smile on her lips. "What ails my lord this evening?" she queried lightly. "Can it be that Mrs. Houghton's ample charms have left their impress on his too susceptible heart? Are you aware that you've been as silent as a sphinx all evening? Can't you atone with one sparkling speech—any small *mot* will do—before we say good night?" She had come very near, so near that the fragrance of the flower in her hair seemed to his intoxicated senses the subtle essence of her personality. He felt his wonted repression slipping away and, with a murmured word of excuse, was turning toward his own door when Victorine put out a detaining hand.

"What is it, Roger? Are you angry? Won't you speak to me?"

He paused abruptly. The look on his face should have warned her of an emotional crisis.

"If I should speak," he said huskily, "it would be only to say what you wouldn't care to hear."

"Then say it," she commanded. "Anything so delightfully mysterious must be interesting."

"This, then," he whispered hoarsely; "I love you, love you—do you hear?"

The filmy evening wrap she had worn had fallen away, revealing the beauty of her dazzling shoulders and the perfect poise of her head on the full white throat; the light from above fell full on her lifted face. Her vivid beauty struck upon his senses with something like a shock. Before he could stay himself he had caught her in his arms and was pressing wild kisses on cheek and throat and lips. An instant and he had released her.

"I beg your pardon," he said quietly; "or, rather, I don't ask you to pardon what I can't forgive myself." Without waiting for reply, he turned and entered his own apartment.

As Victorine flashed on the lights on either side the mirror in her own room, she saw a glowing face reflected in its depths. A vivid wave of color dyed her cheek; her eyes were aflame with an unwonted light.

"Oh," she breathed tremulously to the face within the mirror, "I wonder . . . If I could be sure . . ."

Chapter Eleven

IN the face of the fact that his vigorous prosecution of Reuben Halleck had won him the deadly enmity of a host of Halleck's clansmen, Landis had elected to go in person into the Kentucky mountains in quest of certain necessary testimony and certain important witnesses for the Commonwealth. To the folly of this proceeding no one was more keenly alive than he; yet, despite the protests of his associates, he had definitely decided to undertake it. That another, less marked than he, could carry the venture to as successful issue was urged upon him; but the unspoken thought in Landis's mind had been that if dangers were to be encountered, he, who had less to live for than another, should take the chances.

Few knew of the undertaking, Victorine least of all. He had simply told her that business would necessitate his absence for a few days, a statement which she had accepted without question.

Of late he had been vaguely conscious of a change in her attitude toward him—a change too subtle to admit of analysis, yet none the less perceptible. He made no effort to define the difference, from which he augured neither hope nor promise. He had accepted unquestioningly the conditions of their existence; with characteristic pertinacity he clung to the belief that they were final and immutable.

Victorine, on her own part, could scarcely have defined her mental attitude. To her own surprise, she found that after the first poignant passion of regret had passed a calm which held no hint of despair had succeeded; and that life, despite her loss, held yet much of interest and pleasure for her. She became presently aware, with a sense of shock and shame at her own defection, that Barrington's image grew daily less and less vivid. She was far from sure of herself and she shrank from self-analysis as her incertitude increased. Was it possible that she might forget; might even in time bring herself to regale another with the "funeral baked meats" of a warmed-over love? She clung to the shelter of uncertainty.

Landis's going was, in a sort, a revelation. She was terrified at the swift rush of emotion that shook her as he took her hands at parting—a parting which, though he spoke of it so lightly, had a vague terror for her.

"You must promise to miss me a little," he was saying. "Send me an occasional line. I'll write or wire you daily." Victorine's heart was throbbing wildly.

"Be sure that I shall miss you more than a little," she said, trying hard to steady her voice. Then, with forced lightness, "Roger, do you know I begin to fear that I shall end by adoring you? Please don't let me—we're much more comfortable as we are. Do something

—go bald, grow a beard, take to hard drink or split infinitives—anything to disenchant me!" Then, as anxiety again obtruded itself, "Promise me, Roger, that you'll take no needless chances—"

"My dear child, what 'moving accident' am I likely to meet with in a commonplace trip like this? I'll be with you again almost before you've time to realize my absence." He bent and touched her brow with his lips. As he turned away, Victorine, moved by a sudden impulse, held out both hands.

"Roger," she said breathlessly, "I think—I am almost sure—"

He caught his breath sharply. A wave of color swept over his face, to recede an instant later, leaving it very white.

"Be quite sure, dear," he said gently. "Don't mistake pity for—something more." He stood for a moment, looking down at her, then stooping, kissed her full upon the lips. An instant later he was gone.

The house seemed strangely dull and void without him; the days dragged interminably. Victorine, a prey to conflicting emotions, wandered through the great, empty rooms like a restless spirit. The eddies of indecision engulfed her; the real and the ideal, the actual and possible, warred within her. But as the hours lengthened into days, the issue resolved itself and doubt grew into certainty.

A ray of sunlight stealing through her half-closed casement woke her early on the day of her husband's expected return. It was a rare June morning after a night of rain; a thousand jewels sparkled on every shrub and blade of grass; a thousand beaten blossoms poured their fragrance into the censer of the opening day.

Too restlessly happy to linger in the big, dim house, she wandered out into the morning freshness. The roses on the lawn were heavy with bloom; the air was murmurous with the hum of bee and the undertone of insect life in the grasses; all the world seemed in tune with the rhapsody that sang itself in Victorine's heart.

Up the winding driveway a messenger wheeled swiftly toward her. She knew intuitively that he brought word of her husband. Breathlessly, a happy smile on her lips, she tore open the ominous yellow envelope. An instant later the bright summer world went dark around her. She saw nothing, heard nothing save the words the message held:

Colonel Landis shot from ambush. Killed instantly. Details follow.

Victorine stood very still. The paper fluttered from her fingers and fell unheeded. The light breeze stirred the hair above her brow; the border roses laid their lips caressingly against her hands; in the boughs above her a bird burst into a wild ecstasy of song. Mechanically she bent and took up the fallen message, smoothing and folding it with unconscious care, as she turned slowly toward the house.

Through the deadly apathy succeeding the very passion of despair which had submerged her, Victorine became suddenly conscious of a sound abnormally distinct in the silence that lay like a pall upon the house—a sound which brought her to her feet, her eyes wide with an agony of hope and fear. A swift step sounded along the corridor; a sudden tremor seized her; she could neither stir nor speak. The step came nearer, nearer still. Victorine was conscious that someone spoke her

name, but she found no voice wherewith to answer. Then the door opened quickly and her husband, his face alight with an eagerness almost boyish, stood upon the threshold. For an instant her senses refused their office; she stood before him, swaying slightly, her eyes dilated with fear, fear that this might be but a trick of her tortured brain; and in that instant an awful misapprehension seized upon him. "She had heard," he told himself. "She had fancied herself free—only to find herself again a prisoner!" The light went out of his face.

"Victorine," he said dully, "you've heard, I see. I hoped you had not. It was all the blunder of an overzealous young reporter, anxious to win his spurs. My party was ambushed yesterday and my horse was shot under me. That was all. I'm sorry, Victorine."

But Victorine, to whom consciousness was gradually returning and, with consciousness, conviction, scarcely heard what he was saying. She only knew that he whom she had mourned and, mourning, loved, was before her.

"Roger!" she breathed—the tone was a caress—"Roger!"

Hesitantly, uncertainly, he moved a little toward her, an anguish of question and entreaty in his gaze.

With exquisite abandon she held out her arms.

"Roger," she said again, "dear, dearest, I am sure—quite sure!"

LOVE'S DOMAIN

By BLAKENEY GRAY

FOR Government, Republics I would choose,
Wherein the Star of Liberty doth shine;
Where equal rights for all are all men's dues,
And every man's a King by right divine.

But when it comes to Love—Autocracy!
Avaunt, ye Brotherhoods! Ye are but vain.
No equal rights in Chloe's heart for me!
I'd be the Czar of all that fair domain.

AN OLD ROMANCE

By TUDOR JENKS

AN old-fashioned garden in sunshiny France;
Time, just near twilight—the hour for romance.
A Marquise in silks, with high-heeled pink shoes
Choosing a nosegay of exquisite hues.
But a preoccupation, a turn of the head,
A listless and lingering air would have led
Her shrewd chaperon—had there been any nigh—
To seek for a reason for my lady's sigh.
And hark! There's a scraping beyond the brick wall,
She hears and she turns—not listless at all.
Can this be some plundering fellow to share
The ripe, luscious peaches? Would anyone dare?
And look! This is queer! Just over the cope
Falls a hook that's attached to the end of a rope.
'Tis surely a robber prepared for a raid,
And yet our small Marquise seems no whit afraid.

Do fruit-stealers sport cocked hats trimmed with lace?
That powdered peruke seems much out of place
On the head of a thief! This is no petty theft—
Though the mansion may be of its treasure bereft.

Fie, fie, little Marquise! Not even a frown
To scare the bold lover who leaps lightly down!
No shrinking—no coyness. His strong arms surround
The bold little captive who will not give ground.
He's rifling her lips—and there's no eye to see
How pretty the picture they make, he and she.
They seem quite contented, and so I incline
To think it's no business of yours, or of mine.

What of all this? And what have we got?
The end of a novel, and none of the plot.
Just think of the chapters of woes you are spared,
The tears, sighs and blushes, the grave perils dared,
Long misunderstandings, strange quarrels, long strife,
Before the young nobleman got him a wife.
You've read it so often, know it so well,
I give you the kernel, stripped of the shell.
It's a sort of "boned novel," of fiction served "neat,"
Essence of Romance, the heart of the wheat.
My hero and heroine, happily wed
Will live now in clover until they are dead.

"But the story is over as soon as begun!"
The same's true of life; and what's to be done?

A MESSAGE TO ANGELICA

By KATE MASTERSON

ANGELICA MORTON, heiress, settlement-worker and society girl, though with a strong tendency to a career as a foreign missionary, was just about to enter the fashionable florist shop beneath the Saint Antony Hotel on Fifth Avenue, when she caught sight of Mr. Adelbert Greateaux in the act of purchasing a giant azalea, a most imposing tree of crimson blossoms planted in a gilded basket and tied with yards and yards of satin ribbon.

She turned away just in time, biting her lip, and went back to her car that waited at the curb, stirred by varying emotions. There was a flutter of the heart at seeing Bertie again and then a little thrill of wondering chagrin as to who he could be ordering that mammoth plant for.

It was only a few days before Christmas, but the air was soft and clear as early autumn. It brought memories of the afternoon only a few months before when Bertie and she had parted, breaking the engagement which had existed between them practically since they were children.

It would have been embarrassing had they met in that shop from which even in his schoolboy days Bertie had sent her blossoms to mark her birthdays and holidays, when they had been so happy planning for the future. But since then they had both grown up and Angelica had developed an accented taste for slumming and church work, while Bertie, sad to say, was intent on coaching and outdoor sports, generally. His indoor amusements, enemies of his claimed, were found behind the scenes of a popular music hall.

Now, on the very threshold of the great festival of peace and good-will they had almost met, and she thought Bertie had looked handsomer than ever, but very pale, as he gave his order to the clerk and deftly fastened a white gardenia in his buttonhole, entirely unconscious that his lost and, indeed, his only love was so near.

Had Angelica seen the address to which that gorgeous tree was to be sent, she would have had different sensations from this newly born tenderness that thrilled her as she sped home through the dusk. It was to go to Miss Aileen Maltravors's tiny flat in the Pyramid, where that dazzling young woman lived when she was not entrancing the public by her dancing in a new musical comedy that had caught the town.

Her admirers were so numerous that Bertie's azalea was quite lost among the grove of other blossoms that made the little apartment fragrant on that morning of Christmas Eve when Miss Maltravors was busy opening notes and white boxes containing gifts. There was one especially that interested her so much that she only smiled in an amused way when she saw Bertie's flower carried in.

For the day had brought her an engagement ring and a proposal of marriage from a rich Pittsburger, and no sooner had the azalea arrived than the hallboy almost staggered into the little drawing-room under a great bush of American Beauty roses that touched the pendants of the chandelier. No need to ask where that had come from. It bore in its opulent bloom the very personality of her new adorer.

So the great azalea was placed on the

outer window ledge, all but forgotten, and Aileen dawdled over her chocolate, allowing herself a luxury she rarely indulged in, that of thinking seriously, almost sadly, of giving up her fame and her career for the more sober rôle of matrimony. Yet they would be pleased out there in the little Kansas home from which she, then Jennie Schenck, had run off five years ago to join a theatrical company that had played a one-night stand in their town.

She wondered if they had forgotten her or forgiven that flight from the little cottage where roses not so grand as these nodded toward her clambered over the porch where she played as a child.

So does the sight and the perfume of flowers waken beautiful thoughts, and the Maltravors flat was full of posies that morning and Aileen's eyes were sweet and moist and reminiscent. And if flowers have souls, as those who love them claim, then Bertie's azalea on the window-sill, almost hidden by the heavy lace curtain, must have planned to have its part in the little drama of life to which it had been moved from the Saint Antony shop.

And yet it would never have had its chance if it had not been disposed of in order to make room for the Pittsburger's posies. So do the great events of life hinge on trifles lighter than air; although the simile is not a good one here, for the azalea in its earthenware pot certainly weighed many pounds and the gilded basket a few more.

Just then Aileen, sitting thinking, caught the sound of music from below, a mandolin and some other stringed instrument deftly played in perfect time. She moved to the window, drew the curtain aside and looked down into the courtyard, where four colored musicians had begun a dinky song with many trills and variations.

When they reached the chorus they raised their voices and sang sweetly and beautifully:

"Oh, the moon shines bright
On ma' ole Kentucky home!"

As they concluded, windows were

opened and silver coins went rattling down to the stone pavement in plentiful, holiday profusion, for there were generous theatrical hearts in the Pyramid flats, which was one reason why the darkies came to play there. So does Fate weave its threads—but Byron or someone said that once before, so much better than it can be said again!

Again the music tinkled and again Aileen's lips were tremulous with new sensations. She leaned on the sill to better catch the melody:

"Oh, the moon shines bright
On ma' ole Kentucky home!"

Her arm quivered against the ledge, strained in her unaccustomed position, as with the other hand she reached for her purse. As she turned, the elbow on the sill touched the gilded basket of Bertie's azalea ever so lightly.

With a whirl and a whoof and a rattle awful to listen to, it tipped and went down—down—down—it seemed a mile, and then a terrible crash and a shout disturbed the music, and windows went up on all sides and Aileen fell back against the cushion shaking with fright, for she knew that if that giant tree in its bed of earth had fallen upon one of the singers it would put an end to his singing for all time.

Then as she called to her maid she heard the most welcome of sounds—laughter, and her heart beat again. She looked down and one of the men was gathering up the beautiful tree still with its card attached, hardly hurt by the fall, although loosened from its flower-pot, which lay in pieces near it.

All eyes were on her window, and she hid behind the curtains and sent the girl down to the men with some money, and peering out, she saw them depart later, highly elated with the gains which the accident had brought them as they carried aloft the blooming plant in its gilded basket knotted with satin ribbon.

The episode tended to wake her from her trance, and she despatched a long telegram to her people in Kansas to say that she was coming to see them on her honeymoon and wished them all

a Merry Christmas. Where we may leave Aileen Maltravors.

But the azalea still had its mission to fill, its message to Angelica quite as important as the famous one to Garcia. A day or two after the holiday Angelica started to attend to some belated Christmas charities, and one of the addresses to which she wished to go was that of a populous colored tenement where she had been told a starving family waited for aid. Her conscience reproached her as she climbed the stuffy stairs, one odor growing more insistent as she ascended, slightly reassuring her as to her delay in looking after this case, for it was the succulent scent of freshly boiled ham.

Owing to her delay she was unexpected, for the family, a large one, sat around a bounteously spread board, the odorous center-piece being surrounded by sweet potatoes, corn bread and cabbage, with cups of coffee placed about and a general air of rejoicing. They looked up munching, their jaws growing rigid with surprise, for they knew this was the Settlement Lady, and they wondered why she smiled in such an odd, frightened manner.

Her eyes had looked beyond the feast to a mammoth azalea in a gilded basket tied with coquettish satin ribbon. Her heart was beating fast, for she was out of breath from the climb, but she managed to ask where they had gotten such a good dinner; and the mother of the starving ones, fat and with a red bandanna about her head, murmured ecstatically of a kind gentleman who had played Santa Claus.

And Angelica's eyes still shone and little roses began to break out in her

cheeks and she moved cautiously behind the chairs to where the great azalea stood like a soldier to deliver its message. She bent craftily above it, as though to enjoy its perfume better, for the ham was far more pungent in its scents, and her eye caught the card which read simply:

MR. ADELBERT GREATEAUX

The little roses in her cheeks broke into riotous bloom and then she paled with the thought of Bertie, her Bertie, who chose this noble way in which to work good deeds that he pretended to despise. Tears came—she just managed to say:

"Is this—is this—" She could not finish. The old mammy had risen, peering at her face, in which her woman instinct was reading romances—and she was glad that their presence seemed to agitate the Settlement Lady to such an extent that she forgot to question much.

"Yes—Missy; yes, Missy! That sure is the kind gentleman! He sent the dinner, too!" They all had risen now. And Angelica never noticed in her excitement that they had a gas range, but delicately pressed an order for a ton of coal in the old mammy's hand and drifted out and down the stuffy stairs, her face radiant with the joy she had found there.

And Bertie never knew why it was he was called back like a prodigal lamb, for Angelica never told him. She had made up her mind to be more subtle and more worthy of Bertie, and when she whispered into his coat collar asking him to forgive her, he merely kissed her twice in a pale, stern way, for he too had grown wise in the interim.

HIGH DIPLOMACY

MRS. GRAMERCY—You look all tired out
MRS. PARK—No wonder. It's so trying to find out from your friends what they'd like to have for Christmas without conveying the impression that they may expect it from you.

SEPARATION

By MILTON HEATHCOTE

WE had some words and separated, my wife and I.
She went her way and I went mine.
She took the cars for the city.

There she lived amid the rush and clash of trains, the whirl of trolley cars,
the shouts of impatient drivers and the honk of speeding automobiles.

I went back to my lonely home, dreary and desolate.

Did I think of her often?

Truly, did I.

Constantly her dear image rose before me in broad daylight and in the
darkest night.

Time passed.

One day as evening drew on, restless and disconsolate, I drove to the
station.

Oh, joy!

There she was on the platform.

She dropped her packages and grabbed me round the neck.

She had been on a visit.

FOR THE CRY OF A LITTLE CHILD

By ALFRED DAMON RUNYON

I DREAMED of a legion of women, who waited with eyes aglow
In the shadow of Loves Forgotten, by the Ports of the Long Ago;
I dreamed of a legion of women whose faces were tenderly mild—
And hark! In the night I heard it—the cry of a little child!

I looked on the waiting women through the mist of a thousand years;
And some of their eyes were smiling and some were suffused with tears.
Yet they sang as a choir in training, and the song of the waiting throng
Was the old, old cry to Heaven: "How long, O Lord, how long?"

I dreamed of a legion of women who stood in a driving rain;
Who raised their voices singing, yet sang but one refrain;
I looked on the waiting women, and their faces were white and wild—
And hark! In the night I heard it—the cry of a little child!

IN DEEP WATERS

By WALTER HACKETT

THE strange silence which lay about the schooner by its very oddity brought Belden, sleeping restlessly in his berth, to his full senses. For a space he lay quiet, listening. Except for the straining of the timbers as the vessel wallowed in the heavy seas, there was no sound. Filled with alarm, he jumped from his berth, and dressing hastily made his way through the cabin, up the companion-way to the deck. It was still dark, but in the gloom he could manage to see the black waters against the boat's side. The schooner had settled far deeper than when he had lain down a few hours before. Undoubtedly the leak was gaining fast.

He saw all this at a glance, and then the great silence thrust itself again upon his consciousness. Once more the feeling of alarm possessed him. He turned and glanced at the wheel. There was no one standing by it. It was not even lashed, but whirled this way and that as the restless waves tossed the rudder about. Hardly able to believe his sight he groped his way to it and caught it in his hands, bracing his feet as he steadied it.

He held it so only for a moment. Then he made his way swiftly forward. The deck was absolutely deserted. With a panic that increased with every step he took, he went farther forward and peered into the forecastle. The rattling lantern fastened by a hook to the foremast was still lit, and he could dimly discern the berths. They were all empty.

He sprang down the stairs and tore the lantern from its fastening. Carrying it over his arm, he went back to the deck. He crept along to the main

hatchway of the hold, and lowering the lantern peered into its dark, stinking depths. For a moment he could see nothing. Only the sound of moving water—water in the hold—came to him. While he waited for his eyes to become accustomed to the faint light, he called out. But only silence answered him after the sound of his own voice had died away.

Presently in the far depths he made out a glimmer. He gasped as he saw it. It was the reflection in the water of the lantern he held in his hand. The meaning of the sight was plain to him. The leak had gained until water now covered the cargo. Better able now to peer through the darkness, he turned his eyes to the pump. It was standing in its place, solitary, abandoned.

The sight told him all. But it did not shock him greatly. It seemed as if he had known the truth from the moment of his sudden awakening. The captain and the crew had deserted. While he slept they had left the schooner to sink—and left him to sink with her—and besides himself there were the man and his wife—the passengers—who at that very moment were sleeping peacefully below in their cabin. The crew whom he had trusted had left them—the three of them alone—in a sinking ship that was heedlessly drifting about at the mercy of the bitter sea.

He rose to his feet and made his way to the side, where he leaned against the rigging and gazed into the black waters. He thought they were closer up even than when he had come upon deck. Surely the vessel was going down with incredible swiftness.

The knowledge of the ship's peril had come to him only in flashes of consciousness and had brought him no throb of terror nor any plan for relief. He knew the facts and understood them, but that they applied to himself he could not realize. It was as though he were a shadowy figure in a dream.

While he was thinking the morning came. Not slowly, but in a flash, as it always comes in the southern seas—like a curtain torn asunder. A ray of gray light sprang over the sea, whitening its tips and changing its somber black to vivid blue. The gray light changed to silver, flushed to rose, deepened into purple and then transformed itself into a blue sky flecked with clouds of spotless white as the sun leaped from behind the waste of waters. The brightness of its glory seemed to fill the world with life and joy. Only the face of the man who leaned against the vessel's side remained gray and hopeless. For the coming of the day and its light had given him a knowledge which left him stunned. The deserting crew had taken with them every lifeboat!

They had, it was true, left behind them the dingey. This was a tiny craft—almost a canoe. It could hold but two people—and three had been left behind upon the sinking ship. Three, and one of them Helen Taggart, the woman he loved, the woman who had married his best friend.

The force with which this last blow struck brought to his numbed senses a sudden appreciation of the peril that faced him. The gray fled from his face, leaving it dull, colorless. He caught hold of the rigging to save himself from falling. For some moments he stood there, swaying back and forth with the motion of the vessel. Then there came upon him a great resolution. He would not speak to them of the small boat! Up to this moment he had lived his lonely life without the woman he loved, and now that he must die—and no other course was open to him—she would die beside him. There was a fierce joy in the thought. He loosed his grip upon the tarred rope and stood erect, strong, brave, self-reliant.

Taggart came out of the companion-way upon the deck, and for a moment he stood blinking in the morning sunlight. Suddenly his expression changed. His eyes, the dull, unseeing eyes of the landsman, had discovered that there was something wrong. He groped and reeled his way to Belden's side—the vessel was rolling heavily—and peered at him questioningly.

"What is it, Dick?" he asked quietly.

"We are sinking," answered Belden simply; "the leak that sprung the night before last has got the better of us. The crew realized this before I did, and last night, while I was getting a little sleep, they deserted. Every one of them deserted," he added with calm bitterness; "every one of them, damn them!"

Taggart's face went white as he heard the news.

"How long will she keep afloat?" he asked gravely.

"Two hours, perhaps," was the answer, "but . . . no more."

"Then we will have to take to the boats at once," said Taggart.

Belden turned his haggard face from the other and gazed out across the rolling waves, all green now and glistening in the bright sunlight.

"They took all of the boats with them," he said in a low voice. He did not speak of the dingey. There was little chance of the other noticing it where it lay hidden beneath its canvas cover.

"My God!" cried Taggart, as he clutched the rail to steady himself. "Helen!"

The name brought a paler shade to Belden's cheek, but he did not turn his head. He kept his gaze on the sea.

It was Taggart, at length, who broke the silence. He had conquered his weakness and his voice came calm and even.

"We never thought it would end like this, Dick, did we?" he said gently. "When we were boys at New Haven and used to plan our futures together summer evenings under the shadows of the elms—"

Belden turned quickly and looked at him with an odd little twisted smile.

"No," he answered; "no, we never thought so then—and yet, somehow, now it seems that I have always known that the end would be—this."

There was a depth of melancholy in his voice—a ring of that utter loneliness which is, perhaps, the greatest of all tragedies. But it fell upon unheeding ears. A sudden gust of impotent rage had swept over Taggart.

"I wonder," he said bitterly, raising his face to the sky above him, "why God permits such suffering?"

"We shall know soon enough," said Belden almost lightly.

"Yes," answered the other simply, his anger passing, "there will soon be no yesterday for us."

Suddenly Taggart's eyes gleamed.

"Look!" he whispered hoarsely.

"What is it?" asked Belden, although he knew what the other's eyes had found.

"It's a boat!" screamed Taggart. "Thank God!"

Tears glistened on his cheek. Hope had made him give way to emotion.

Belden shrugged his shoulders. It was the shrug of the gambler who had staked all upon the turning of a card—and had lost. Not a muscle of his face moved. It was fate, and long ago in the early years of his lonely life he had learned not to quarrel with that.

"It's the dingey," he said quietly. "I had meant to speak to you of it before. It will hold—only two."

Taggart did not at once grasp the significance of the statement, but slowly the fact dawned upon his brain and his face contracted. With the sob of a woman he sank down by the rail.

"Merciful God!" he breathed.

Belden looked at him, a faint smile on his lips.

"It's a slight skiff," he said presently in his lifeless voice, "but with you and—" He hesitated for a moment. "With you and your wife it will keep afloat for a time. There is a chance that you may be picked up by a passing ship but . . . it is only . . . a chance."

Taggart rose and stared into Belden's eyes.

"And you?" he asked quietly.

Belden shrugged his shoulders and glanced about the deck.

"I will stay with the ship," he replied.

"No—no!" cried Taggart. "You must come with us—surely the boat will hold three."

Belden shook his head.

"With the three of us aboard she would founder in five minutes," he said.

"Then," said Taggart quickly, "we will all stay here and meet it together."

For an instant there was a glow in Belden's eyes and a flush came to his cheeks.

"You must not forget your wife," he said with finality. "She must have every chance."

"But you?" broke in the other.

"It does not matter about me," said Belden. "I have been alone always—and it will not be hard to meet it—alone. At first," he went on, "I was afraid. That is why I did not speak of the dingey. But now it is different. You must go in it, Harry," he went on, calling the other by his familiar name, "and you must take her with you. Think what life means to her. It is not I who make the sacrifice by remaining here; it is you who do it by going. Yours is the braver part."

As he finished, Taggart put out his hand and the other grasped it.

"God bless you, Dick!" he said.

"Then you will go?" asked Belden.

"Yes," answered Taggart; "but how—how shall we tell her?"

As he spoke he turned toward the companionway, and, almost as though she had been answering a summons, his wife appeared. She was a tall, lithe woman of thirty, graciously beautiful; a woman whose beauty lay mainly in the sweet strength of her face.

For a moment she stood breathing the fresh, salty air. Then she turned, and seeing the two men, nodded to them brightly and waved them a gay greeting. But her second glance showed

her the gravity of their expressions, and she went quickly toward them.

"What is the matter?" she asked as she reached them. "What is wrong?"

Neither man for a moment answered her, and neither met her questioning eyes—beautiful eyes they were, blue and deep like the sea itself.

"Well?" she said impatiently.

"The schooner is sinking, Mrs. Taggart," replied Belden, carefully averting his eyes under her steady scrutiny, "and the crew have deserted."

She paled a little as he spoke, but she neither moved nor cried out, and when at last she spoke her voice was unexpectedly steady.

"I suppose we shall have to take to the boats," she said. Her manner was entirely matter-of-fact. It was as if she were stating some commonplace.

"The crew took all the lifeboats," answered Belden, "all except the dingey—and that will hold but two."

Her husband stepped forward and laid his hand upon her arm.

"You and I are to take our chance in that," he said, quietly attempting to draw her away. "Come."

She did not turn as he spoke, but instead kept her eyes steadily on Belden's averted face.

"And you?" she asked in a queer, breathless voice, as she put her husband's hand from her arm.

Though he did not turn to look at her, Belden knew she was speaking to him. For a moment he did not answer, but when finally he did he still looked seaward.

"I will stay here," he said.

The woman stood silent while a light dawned on her face. Then suddenly, as though swept by some terrific force, she went toward him with outstretched arms.

"Thank God!" she cried, and through her voice there surged and sang a fierce and wonderful joy.

As he heard, Belden turned toward her.

"Thank God!" she repeated; "for now I know that you love me as I love you—at last. But say it—say it! Tell me, tell me with your lips close to mine

and your breath hot in my face—tell me."

Her hands were upon his shoulders now; her eyes were close to his. Just for an instant he watched her quietly. Suddenly the man's iron self-possession fled from him and he strained her close to his heart.

"I love you better than my life," he muttered thickly. "Yes, and God knows—more—more!"

Then their lips met in a long kiss. Even while they still stood so Taggart, who had been watching them, dazedly silent, sprang forward with a bitter cry like that of a wounded beast. With a fierce oath he tore the two apart and struck Belden a cruel blow. The latter staggered back beneath it, his face red with blood. A sudden pitch of the vessel steadied him, and he started toward Taggart with glowing eyes. The latter sprang to meet him and in a moment they were clasped together, fighting for their lives.

The woman stood by silent, her hands clasped, her bosom heaving. Had danger never assailed them, had their voyage ended in safety, she would have kept her secret always locked in her breast. But now the presence of death had made her primitive. The two men were fighting for her—fighting to die with her—and she gloried in the struggle. She did not shrink at the sight of the blood that covered them; she did not tremble as she heard their cries of rage, their quick gasps of pain. And when she saw that the man she loved must win, she gave a loud, fierce cry.

They were equally matched so far as strength was concerned, although Belden, because of his long, active life upon the trading schooner, was better fitted to endure. For a time they struggled about the deck. Then suddenly they fell together, squirming and straining, their hot breath striking each other in the face, their hot eyes blazing with hatred. Belden felt his opponent yield and laughed with triumph. And while the laugh still rang out, with a mighty effort he drew himself loose from the other's failing hold, and with a quick

turn threw Taggart on his back, dexterously pinioning his arms beneath him. Then, with his knee on the other's chest, he drew from its sheath a long knife and held it glittering in the sunlight, high above his head, ready to plunge it into the other's heart.

Just as the knife began to descend on its mission of death, Belden looked up and his gaze swept the horizon. His arm became rigid, his eyes wide and staring, and his nerveless hand loosed its hold upon the knife, which fell with a clatter on the deck.

"Look!" he cried.

As he spoke the woman raised her head and saw a great steamer bearing down upon them. Its crew had seen the signal of distress flying at the mast-

head and had answered it. They were saved.

Belden rose slowly, and, stooping, lifted the prostrate Taggart to his feet. The latter thanked him simply. Once more they were men living beneath the restraint of ages.

Silently the three gathered at the rail of the sinking schooner and watched the small boat which the steamer had sent for their rescue as it breasted the waves. Swiftly and steadily it came toward them, its oars flashing in the sunlight, and as it came within hail a ringing cheer went up from the men who manned it.

But it brought no answering cheer from those to whom it brought safety, and in their eyes there was no hope.

THE DEVIL'S POPULACE

By HELEN DUDLEY

THERE is a sordid crowd out there—out on the busy street—
 I can hear the rush, through the dust-choked air,
 Of their hastening, selfish feet. . . .
 There is a sordid crowd out there!

There is a strident crowd out there—out in the glaring day—
 I know there is nothing they would not dare,
 They are taught to fight their way. . . .
 There is a strident crowd out there!

There is a harsh, bad crowd out there—out on the pulsing walks—
 They have learned to say, "I do not care,"
 And they laugh when the Devil talks. . . .
 There is a harsh, bad crowd out there!

There is a pitiless crowd out there—out on the beaten sod—
 They have laid the wistful Christ's wounds bare,
 For money is their god. . . .
 There is a pitiless crowd out there!

Aye, a pitiless, strident, sordid crowd—
 Each day I watch them pass;
 They cry the death of the Christ aloud
 The shouldering, grim-eyed mass. . . .
 Bad and mad, and seldom glad
 But, Christ of Sorrows! Sad—so sad!

December, 1908—6

MRS. DARCY AND THE DOCTORS

By HAROLD SUSMAN

MRS. DARCY was rich. She was very rich indeed. In fact, she was so rich that it made her sick.

She suffered from fatty degeneration of the bank account.

She had been everywhere; she had seen everything; she had done everything.

She had all the diamonds she could wear, and all the rubies, and all the pearls; all the silks, and satins, and velvets, all the feathers, and laces, and gewgaws.

There was nowhere she couldn't go; there was nothing she couldn't have; there was nothing she couldn't do—except be happy.

It bored her to do this, and it bored her to do that, but it bored her most of all to do nothing.

It bored her to ride, and to drive; it bored her to stand up, and it bored her to sit down.

It bored her to eat, and to drink, and to sleep.

So she sent for the doctor—Dr. Black.

He gave her pills.

She grew worse.

So she sent for a second doctor—Dr. Green.

He gave her powders.

She grew still worse.

So she sent for a third doctor—Dr. White.

Dr. White was a modern doctor, a very modern doctor, an ultra-modern doctor.

He said that he was as much a metaphysician as a "matter-physician"!

"What is the trouble with you?" said Dr. White.

"Everything!" said Mrs. Darcy.

"You have a beautiful home," said Dr. White.

"I am tired of it," said Mrs. Darcy.

"You have beautiful jewels," said Dr. White.

"I am tired of them," said Mrs. Darcy.

"You have a beautiful face," said Dr. White.

"I am tired of it!" said Mrs. Darcy.

"How do you pass your time?" said Dr. White.

"I don't pass it," said Mrs. Darcy.

"It passes itself. I am too tired even to pass the time! My hands are too tired to embroider. My eyes are too tired to read. In fact, my brain is too tired—to think!"

"And what makes you so tired?" said Dr. White.

"That is what I want you to find out!" said Mrs. Darcy.

"I have already found that out, my dear lady," said Dr. White. "I found that out very quickly. In fact, I found it out as soon as I looked at you. I might even say I found it out before I looked at you. I suspected it as soon as I looked at—your home!"

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Darcy. "And what is the matter with me? What is the name of my complaint?"

"You are quite right to call it a—complaint!" said Dr. White. "It is not a disease. It is merely a—complaint. But it is a serious one—for you. I will not name it. It might offend you. The name is not a pretty one!"

"And can you help me?" said Mrs. Darcy.

"I can try," said Dr. White.

"Oh, can you only try?" sighed

Mrs. Darcy. "And must you leave the rest—to nature?"

"Yes, I must leave the rest to—your nature!" said Dr. White.

"Will you make out a prescription?" said Mrs. Darcy.

"If you like," said Dr. White, and he wrote a few words on a scrap of paper.

"Oh, the pills I have taken, and the powders!" sighed Mrs. Darcy.

"I will give you neither pills nor powders," said Dr. White.

"Must I take your—prescription inside or outside?" said Mrs. Darcy.

"Inside!" said Dr. White, with a strange smile.

He handed the scrap of paper to Mrs. Darcy, and left immediately.

Mrs. Darcy gave the prescription to her secretary.

The secretary gave it to the maid.

The maid gave it to the butler.

The butler gave it to the page.

And the page took it to the chemist.

The chemist looked at the scrap of paper, and read what was written on it, appeared very much surprised and then handed it back to the page.

"This is not for me," said the chemist. "It is for—Mrs. Darcy!"

So the page took the prescription back to the butler.

The butler gave it back to the maid.

The maid gave it back to the secretary.

And the secretary gave it back to Mrs. Darcy.

"The chemist says that this is not for him," said the secretary. "He says it is for you!"

"For me!" said Mrs. Darcy. "What a nuisance! I am so tired. I am so bored. I am so weak. I am too tired to read it. You must read it for me. What does it say?"

The secretary looked at the scrap of paper and became very red in the face.

"What does it say?" demanded Mrs.

Darcy. "Why don't you read it to me?"

"I—I don't understand it!" said the secretary.

"Well, it is not necessary for you to understand it!" said Mrs. Darcy. "If it is for me, you are not supposed to understand it! If it is for me—I will understand it! What does it say?"

"It says," said the secretary, "Prescription for Mrs. Darcy, with Dr. White's compliments: *Do something for somebody!*"

"What does that mean?" cried Mrs. Darcy.

"I—I told you that I didn't—understand it, Mrs. Darcy!" said the secretary.

"Well, why don't you understand?" cried Mrs. Darcy. "What do you suppose I have you for? I am too weak to open my own letters, so I have you to open them for me! I am too weak to understand my own letters, so I have you to understand them for me! And if I get crazy letters from crazy doctors, and my secretary is too crazy to explain the situation to me—I shall go crazy myself!"

And Mrs. Darcy worked herself into violent hysterics.

But all the rest of the day and all through the night Mrs. Darcy heard the words ringing in her ears, saw the words dancing before her eyes—"Do something for somebody!"

She almost wondered if there was anything in this advice, in this strange advice, this peculiar "prescription."

But then her old doctors came with their old remedies, Dr. Black with his pills and Dr. Green with his powders, and she soon forgot the new doctor with his new notions and his impertinences and his insults.

"Do something for somebody!"

The idea! When she was too sick even to do anything for herself!

MERELY CURIOSITY

FIRST TRAMP—I've been looking for work.

SECOND TRAMP—You don't mean it! What for?

"Oh, just out of idle curiosity."

THE WARRANT

A Chronicle of the Law

By EMERSON HOUGH

"F RONT! Form fours! March!" The voice of the subaltern rang clear. It was followed by the crunch of the sandy soil under steady, rhythmic footfalls. The entire detail of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police at Fort Augustus had turned out for dismounted duty. Even the commanding officer was needed; and presently he appeared from his quarters, adjusting the cuff of his glove as he moved down the path to meet his men. A tall man, Major Henry Weston, all soldier; the man to head a nasty charge, to sit long in saddle, to face any dangerous or serious duty. The duty now in hand was serious.

The little company passed from the parade ground toward a low log building used as a prison, which now had a solitary occupant. The Northwest Mounted Police does its duty unemotionally but surely. It had tracked this prisoner, a half-breed, from the Mackenzie, where he had killed his squaw wife; had followed him across country to the Rockies, south to the line, into Montana; and so back again to the far, cold North, whither, with the strange fatalism of the criminal, in time he had returned. Taken at last on the very scene of his crime, the half-breed had had his trial in due course here at Fort Augustus, and had been found guilty. Now he was to die.

The little body of uniformed men drew up at the rear of the log house. A detail was sent in to pass out the murderer. The company formed square, within the lines rising the sharp triangle

of poles from which hung the waiting noose. A grave had been dug deep and narrow at the edge of the yard, and this too lay within the square. Major Henry Weston could look into it easily from his place. The criminal, handed out finally through the window, looked square down into it with blinking eyes.

The men had ordered arms with grim exactness. Their eyes were steady and each figure was motionless. If any one of them winced at what now was about to be, his face was burned too brown to show it.

They took the murderer to his allotted place beneath the tripod. The officer raised his sword as a signal. A man slipped the noose over the prisoner's head, shifting it to fit his neck. So, as he stood thus face to face with the law which he had forgotten, he heard the commanding officer read to him the warrant of the King.

And then they hanged the murderer. And then they buried him. And because he had killed a woman they buried him face downward.

"Wait!" commanded Major Weston. "Put the King's warrant on his back. Let him lie there so. He killed a woman, d'ye see?"

They put the death warrant on his back and filled his grave and left him there, face downward forever, with proof of his crime upon him.

Then the drum tapped, slowly rhythmic, and the men marched back to the barracks. Weston went into his own quarters. Presently he called his housekeeper to prepare the evening

meal. He had at that time only a housekeeper.

"Christine," he said, "you may make the tea a trifle strong."

He sat, his head drooped in thought. It is not a soldier's duty to reflect; but for some reason he could not shake off the picture of the man he had seen in his grave, face down.

Chapter Two

CHRISTINE he called her. God and some notary of old Europe may know what her real name was back there in the corner of the world whence she came, somewhere between Russia and Austria, the devil and the pitiless sea. Galicia they call this country; but where it is, or why, very few of this continent know. Its people are patient. They are sodden with generations of injustice and poverty. Religion, hope, sweetness of life, comfort—these things are barred to them. Wherefore, because for a time we have what we call a New World, among these arise many and plod oxlike hither. At first they do not grasp what life really may be. Often they are for a time dazed, stunned, trying to learn that they may one day be held as human, may one day dare to hope.

Sometimes colonies of these folk appear in the far Northwest. Ignorant yet that even God exists, they labor there as they labored in the Old World, using their women as beasts of burden and thinking that the natural way of life. Because a horse is as strong as a dozen women, and hence costs more money than a whole colony of these newcomers possessors, and because sod must be broken before grain can grow—that is why they put their women to the traces to pull the sod plows. Usually there is a fine, strong young woman at the head of the line, to give the others courage. For the most part all are happy, joy of life and freedom appearing in their songs as they plod onward with the plow.

That was how Weston first met Christine. She was lead girl on the

plow. There were a score of others, young and old and middle-aged, behind her on the line. Some were bent and broken, some carried children as they stooped in the harness. A few were young and sturdy; but of all these Christine was most comely. What we call beauty is a thing of flesh and bone and covering tissues. It would have been seemly, therefore, for an artist to have admired the straight young body of this Galician maid, to have admired the frankness of her gaze, the clean health of her skin, the brightness of the white of her eye, the darkness of the dark of it, the crown of her heavy black hair, the brown broadness of her neck at its base, the roundness and the strength of her arms bared to the sun, the grace of her ankles exposed to the grasses. A picture upon canvas? Yes; and more than a picture, here on the flowered sod of a country where a man might ride hundreds of miles and see not a woman anywhere.

The Northwest Police minister to the sick, do washing for the widows, carry the mails, open the roads, protect the weak, avenge the dead. They are Church and State and Society for the far new lands. It is a part of their duty to see that no brutes are unnecessarily punished, not even Galician women. Wherefore, when word came that these newcomers were using their women as draft horses, as they had been accustomed to do in Galicia, orders went out from Ottawa that this must be stopped, along with the Doukhobor processions. Weston himself had ridden out to learn about this colony. Crossing the level miles of prairie he saw the sun gleaming on ground new turned, so pulled up and put his field-glasses to his eyes. Thus he brought into view the low sod houses which these colonists had scarce paused to build; also, a little distance therefrom, a long line of women bending at the plow. Then he rode over. Then he saw Christine.

The line of plowwomen halted, smiling pleasantly. Of course, here was the overlord. They did not know exactly what form the overlord would take in this country, but lord of some sort there

must be. Without question, one so strong, stern and handsome as this figure who approached them thus royally clad, thus bold and peremptory, thus fit to rule, must be one of high degree. They halted submissively, awaiting his commands.

"Drop it, you beggars, I say!" commanded Weston. "None of this! Get out, all of you, and don't you let me see this again, or by the Lord I'll jug the lot of you. Do you hear?"

They broke apart, smiling, not understanding. Christine was the most smiling, the blithest of them all. She was having a delightful day. It was a joy to her to help pull this beautiful new painted plow, whose shafts were guided by her father. Ah! life was a sweet thing, thought Christine. Especially now did the birds sing sweetly in the grasses, the clouds float dreamily and kind, the wind blow warm and soft, since this radiant being, scarlet-and-gold-clad, bold, imperious, commanding, seeming a leader of the world, had come. Christine's hand rested on her bosom after it had brushed back the hair from her eyes; and hers was the bosom of a woman.

They sent for Peter, the immigration agent, at the nearest sod house, and Peter interpreted, having dwelt upon these shores for full three years. "The gentleman says that you unclean people must go back to your houses again. You are to stop your plowing and turn loose the women. You may plow with horses, but no longer with women."

"In the name of the saints, why not women?" asked he who was called Alexander, guider of the plow. "We are poor!" he cried. "We cannot buy horses. In the name of mercy, why not use our women?"

Peter shook his head. "It is spoken," said he. "The lord wills it as he has told you. This nobleman will be swift with his hand if you disobey."

"Of course, that we expect," rejoined Alexander. "At my old home my master beat me thrice weekly, as the scars on my back will show," and he slipped down his sheepskin tunic. "We are ready to be beaten, for that is

the portion of the poor, but let us arrange that the beating may come each Saturday or Monday. We will come to town and be beaten; but we also pray to be allowed to plow, so that in time we may buy horses. I find these women do not plow so fast as horses do."

But again Peter shook his head. "Stop, or you will go to prison. You will not be beaten, but you must no longer plow with women."

"But what then shall these women do?" questioned Alexander, spreading out his hands.

"They may work in the house, they may labor in the field with fork or hoe, but they may not work with their shoulders in the harness. That is the law of this foolish land," advised Peter.

"How, then," said Alexander, with sullen anger on his face, "does this nobleman think I can keep all these—that girl there—in idleness? She eats, ah, good saints! how she eats. Shall I not have her labor to pay her way? If not, then is this no land of freedom?"

The tears of Alexander fell upon his beard. Four old women, learning of this great wrong to them and theirs, sat down upon the plow beam and wept aloud.

"I'll tell you what," said Weston at length; "ask that girl if she can cook a little bit. My Jap has left me, and there's no longer a mess in the garrison. Ask her if she can cook."

Peter grinned. He had seen swift wonders done. So he remarked briefly, knowing the quickest way to end all discussion over a very simple matter, that as to Alexander he need weep no more, for his daughter might now earn her keep at the garrison and eat at no expense to her own father. Peter knew Galicia and Galicians. And why should he himself not find favor with the officer at the barracks?

Comment at the post was reserved. A major must eat. His quarters must be swept. Thus Weston, situated on the far frontier, did about what you and I—granted that you and I were tall, strong, able to ride hard, shoot straight and play all a man's games

steadily—would have done ourselves in the first place; and what we would have done in the second place, had we loved the service and hated to hear breath of scandal raised against it. Christine was at first meek, soon proud and happy. She did not merely love Weston. She worshiped him. After a time he married her.

Chapter Three

THE North Transcontinental Railway was not planned, or at least not begun, when Henry Weston met Cicely Wayne years ago at Montreal. She was Cicely Tailleux then, of Baltimore, a belle for two seasons in that difficult field. Montreal for the summer, Europe in the fall—that was the family plan when these two met. Weston had looks and family; Cicely had looks, and again looks, and also family. Men are married today who loved Cicely when she was at the height of her second season. But the family was fatherless, and a widow and a mother must beware of young men who have only looks and family.

Weston took ship with them for England in spite of all, proved that he had family, perhaps a chance yet in the world at some long distant entailed day. The girl loved him and at last admitted it, her arms about his neck as they stood, sobbing at fate. But the next day she was gone; and after that, all in due course, there came the marked copy showing the story of her wedding. It was a prominent wedding even for New York. No doubt you remember the matter.

The lucky man was Dudley Wayne, who had a grimy past and a clean two hundred thousand a year—as the adjective clean is now used. Weston was earning twelve hundred dollars annually. So Weston went to the frontier; and there, because he had no fear of man or horse, because he was always ready for the hardest duty, he came in time to be major, and also to be placed farthest toward the front, where the North Transcontinental was wedging

westward and bringing mixed populations and new problems in law and order.

In time the rails followed the grade on the great Transcontinental. A raw frontier city sprang up at the crossing of the Saskatchewan. Millionaires multiplied. Stately villas sprang up in poplar thickets, and streets extended out to the lakes where wildfowl swam. On thoroughfares long sacred to the dog sledge there came the shouting of captains. Coaches trundled over streets new paved, and automobiles croaked this way and that. The name of the old post was given to this new city, although as a matter of fact the garrison itself was twenty miles distant down the valley.

Twenty miles is just a convenient journey for a pleasure party in a motor car when the roads are good; and a trip to this old post, place of ancient and romantic history, was early rated among the very natural plans of North Transcontinental tourists anxious to see what the country thereabout held by way of interest.

Our human voices sometimes call out in the darkness, longing for the friends whom we have lost. But, says the philosopher, "Lo! the feet of thy friend are already running to meet thee." Is that indeed true? Did the small, misguided feet of Cicely falter, as with measured pose they approached the wrong altar? Did they tread unconsciously lighter at the grave of her dissolute husband? Did they thereafter unwittingly seek some path which might lead them to the side of the man she really loved? And the feet of this man himself—but let us admit that the philosopher spoke the truth. On that very day Weston rode in fifty miles to the post, not knowing why he did so. He had no more than finished with bath and razor before he was summoned to meet one more of those interminable touring parties brought down from the town by the mayor and his associates of the enterprising city council. And so they met, Weston and Cicely.

When a man has once loved a woman he would know her thereafter though he

saw her sixty years of age and looked upon her pityingly. But if you loved a woman as did Weston, and remembered her as still young, with dark hair and white hands—if you remembered that she and all her beauty had once trembled in your arms one time long ago—what then? What if, situated as Weston was at this moment, it all came back to you in one great flood—life, love, a vast sea of unsatisfied, longing love? What if you stood, seeing that now the feet of your friend had come to you—your friend, mournful, questioning, yearning, young and beautiful as ever, now looking into your face? At least this came to Weston.

There was a small registering book where visitors at Fort Augustus wrote their names. The delay which ensued as the visitors crowded in gave the commanding officer time to pull himself together. He bowed as Cicely passed the threshold, bowed as he opened the book for her to sign. He laid his hand upon the page and his hand did not tremble; he was used to risk and doubt and danger. He waited for her to take the pen, and when she wrote firmly, "Cicely Tailleur Wayne," he raised his eyes to hers firmly, fairly; and she met his as fairly. They knew it had to be.

"I find that Mrs. Wayne is an old friend of my family in the East, Mrs. Stone," he said to the dowager alderwoman from town who was in charge of the party. "If you don't mind, I'm going to rob you of her company back. I will send her up in our post car before long."

So at last, after the others had departed, for one sad moment they stood alone, eye questioning eye. She swayed toward him. He caught her in his arms, in his throat all the inarticulate despair held back through years of solitude and silence. Love—the love of them both—burst bounds.

"Harry!" It was all that she could say; but all the years were in it. Her confession, her repentance, her sorrow, her love unkilld—all were in it. He could only choke and hold her tight and put back her hair and touch her lightly with his hands as he clasped her and

kissed her for the sake of the years gone by.

"It is wonderful!" she said at last, "wonderful! I did not know how wonderful. I did not know what we had missed. I did not know you could mean so much to me. Ah, Harry! Harry! and the years we lost!" He did not speak.

"But now you will come away, Harry," she went on. "There is no longer any need—"

He put her back from him in his arms. She was in the very blood of his veins, burning him with her beauty and her love for him. There was no concealment. Both knew that time was made for this, and that no more time must be wasted. He looked at her, frowning. He bent again and kissed her until she was faint.

And Christine? They had forgotten Christine.

Chapter Four

It might have been the look on the Galician girl's face as she fell back, gasping, against the wall, her hands at her cheeks in horror. A servant may be surprised and startled at an inadvertence. But a servant who is a comely woman, dark of eye, fully feminine—a servant who is horrified and smitten with grief and misery at the sight of that which she surprises—a servant who sees another woman and is seen of her; I say, a servant who sees her lord, her husband, in the arms of another woman . . .

After all, it is no wonder that Christine fell against the wall with a sob or something like it in her throat. That was very possibly her right.

Cicely also fell back against the wall. She looked at Christine. Then she looked at her lover. She looked sharply at Christine once more. A slow flush came upon her face. Then she grew pale, cold—cold as though she had been killed.

The way of an eagle in the air, of a serpent on a rock, of a woman in her mind—these things man may not find

out. But Cicely read chapter after chapter of a certain story swiftly now—even as she read over again in her own soul the story of her own life. One woman would have laughed, another would have forgiven; one would have pretended not to know, another would have waited for a later day to cry quits with the man; mayhap another would have scoffed or scorned; some would have proved snobbish or cattish. But Cicely was Cicely.

The law finds us out. Though we cross seas and continents and swim wastes of our blindness, yet the law comes to trail us and find us and finish us one day. Weston had long known that. Cicely knew it now—now when it was too late to leave her quite the same Cicely any more. Not quite the same Weston any more now, perhaps. Maybe not quite the same Christine any more, for that matter.

"Come, Harry," said Cicely, smiling slowly at length out of her whimsically crooked mouth, as he had seen her smile many times. "Come, show me the post. So you're a major now?"

They stepped out to the little pinched shelter which he called his piazza. For a moment they stood there, in sight of the sentry, in sight of all the world, for all they cared.

"I think I know," she said, and laid a hand in his. "I love you, Harry, honey boy. I always did, but more now. You've grown into a perfectly splendid man. Yes, and you love me. Don't I know it? I could maybe—I do not know, but I think maybe I could even *forget*. We make our mistakes. We sin and we settle. It all evens up some time, doesn't it? But now—"

He was stiff-necked and brave. He did not even bend his head.

"But now," she went on briskly—and he always remembered that she dusted off his lapel braid—"since it is this way, let us help settle it all right and fairly. I can fend for myself. I have friends, money, everything I need. I can soften life as much as it can be softened. But now, that girl—what has she to go back to? The hay meadows, perhaps. But—but—since the weak are weak—see, I'm not weak, I'm not *weak*!" She smiled crookedly.

"No," he said, his hand closing over hers. "We are murderers, but we're strong. I'm not weak. But I've killed you—I've killed the woman I loved—the woman who loved me. Let the law punish me. Let it come." They stood for a moment staring into each other's eyes, doing much in what time they had left for one another.

"Christine," said Weston a little later as he stepped back into the room, "you may make the tea a trifle stronger tonight, if you please."

After tea Weston flung himself face down upon the couch at the side of his narrow office wall. He lay as one dead, dead in a narrow grave, dark, silent. There fell from his hand upon the floor a scrap of paper which had come to him from Cicely's hand when at last, in the presence of others, she had laughingly left him. It read: "Good-bye."

Christine could not read as yet, although she was making progress. Busy with her household duties, she picked up the bit of paper. Her lord being apparently asleep, she did not wish to disturb him. She placed the paper carefully upon his back as he lay face down.

MAN, POOR MAN!

MRS. FLUTTER—Mrs. Crabapple says her husband kisses her good-bye every morning of his life.

MR. FLUTTER—I often wondered what gave him that sour expression.

CONTE DE NOËL

Par LUCIE DE LARUE-MARDRUS

LA nuit dorée de Noël, luisant à toutes les vitres, ne déborde-t-elle pas au dehors, à travers les rues des villes et les routes des campagnes? N'y a-t-il pas, malgré les croyances mortes, quelque chose dans l'air d'Occident, qui, de par cet anniversaire merveilleux, enveloppe le monde, pour vingt-quatre heures, d'une atmosphère de légende? Les êtres s'efforcent vers la joie, depuis le bambin tout neuf mettant son soulier dans le cheminée, jusqu'au morne fêtard s'appêtant, avec un entrain inaccoutumé, à réveillonner joyeusement. C'est peut-être l'âme des cloches de minuit qui se répand; c'est peut-être l'esprit druidique du gui, ou bien on ne sait quoi qui tombe, à l'heure des trois messes, du haut des grandes cathédrales et des petits clochers, et aussi du ciel de neige d'où descendent les flocons, comme des fleurs...

C'est une unique chambre, étroite et glacée, dans un quartier malheureux de Paris. Rien de joyeux ne s'y apprête, aucun signe de Noël n'y brille. Une lampe basse en éclaire mal les trois meubles. Il y a contre le lit un berceau, et, près du berceau, la jeune mère, laquelle, d'un mouvement inné chez les femmes, balance du bout du pied son nouveau-né, en chantonnant quelque chose d'ancien.

Abandonnée avec son enfant...

Il y en a des milliers comme elle dans le monde, parce que cette misère de la femme est aussi naturelle que l'insouciance de l'homme. L'homme a pris son plaisir, puis il est allé vers autre chose. La femme, elle aussi, a pris son plaisir; mais la voici attachée à jamais à l'œuvre de chair. Car c'est une injus-

tice nécessaire que les dangereux flancs féminins ne prennent leur part de volupté que pour en faire croître l'arbre redoutable des générations humaines.

On imagine facilement l'histoire ordinaire de cette jeune fille, institutrice ou dame de compagnie, sans doute orpheline, conduite par les revers de l'existence jusqu'à cette condition qui n'était point faite pour son esprit cultivé, ni pour sa claire beauté de brune, ni pour ses grands yeux bleus que l'orage intérieur d'une âme passionnée noircissait fréquemment.

A cause de la loi initiale qui pousse les couples jeunes à s'unir, c'était maintenant dans cette chambre, le résultat d'une saison amoureuse: une jeune femme pathétique et seule, et un tout petit garçon bien portant, endormi dans son nid d'osier.

Sans situation, à présent qu'elle avait plus que sa propre existence à soutenir, elle ne vivait que de quelque économie ancienne et de quelque charité humiliante. Elle avait connu les cruels bureaux de la bienfaisance administrative, les salles de maternité, et aussi les sèches dames patronnesses qui protègent la misère des filles-mères avec un regard désapprobateur. Toute cette charité était là, représentée par ce berceau neuf, par une promesse de mettre l'enfant en nourrice et de trouver une place à la mère, et aussi par la layette chaude et laide qu'on donne aux petits pauvres, pour qu'ils soient, dès les langes, voués à la tristesse de la vie positive et sans ornement.

Et la jeune femme regardait, tout en chantonnant sa ritournelle mineure, les vilains chaussons tricotés et bleus, pendus au bout du berceau, et qui n'atten-

daient que le réveil du bébé pour enfermer de nouveau dans leurs mailles les deux pieds minuscules. Puis, s'étant bout à coup souvenu qu'on était au 24 décembre, elle s'arrêta de bercer et de chanter, et se mit à songer, avec des yeux immenses.

Elle pensa :

— Voici la nuit où, quand j'étais enfant, je mettais mon beau petit soulier dans les cheminées de chez nous. Je ne savais pas qu'un jour viendrait où Noël aurait pour moi ce visage lamentable. J'ai froid, je suis mal ; et puis, surtout, j'ai le cœur si gros qu'il me semble qu'il va éclater dans ma poitrine. Et voici devant moi les chaussons bleus de mon fils, et c'est aujourd'hui le premier Noël de son existence . . . Oui, c'est cette nuit la nuit des cadeaux... Qu'est-ce qu'ils attendent donc, ces deux petits chaussons vides ? Je n'ai même pas un hochet d'un sou à mettre dedans...

Elle appuya sa tête contre le berceau. La torsade foncée de ses cheveux couvrait sa nuque blanche. Les paupières closes, elle se recueillit dans la douleur. Et de grosses larmes passaient à travers ses cils baissés, roulaient toutes droites de ses joues à ses genoux. Car son imagination, aiguïsée par cette veillée de Noël, bâtissait autour des chaussons bleus un roman vraisemblable et désolé.

— Petit chausson, petit chausson qui l'ouvres vainement pour le joujou qui ne vient point, tu deviendras la chaussure, longue d'un pouce, des premiers pas, puis la galoche espiègle de l'écolier, puis le soulier paresseux de l'adolescent qui rêve, et enfin le soulier triste de l'homme. Et j'ai bien peur que tu ne connaisses jamais les bons présents de la vie. Mais quand les petons roses qui, maintenant, tiennent à deux dans ma paume, seront devenus les grands pieds d'un pauvre bougre, alors, semelle éculée, tu traîneras sur les routes de l'existence, dans la trace très ancienne et toujours renouvelée des malheureux qui marchent sur la terre, sans autre but que de mourir à la peine quelque part, un jour, le plus tôt possible...

Elle se répéta, en rouvrant ses yeux plus immenses :

— Le plus tôt possible...

Ses larmes s'étaient arrêtées. Une idée qu'elle n'osait pas approfondir naissait en elle, si terrible que ses vertèbres en frissonnaient.

Elle regarda son bébé dormir. Ainsi, pendant que les grandes personnes vivaient leur vie obscure et mauvaise, il dormait. Il ne savait pas encore...

Longtemps, elle s'arrêta de songer, ne voulant pas aller plus loin. Puis sa pensée formula, avec timidité et épouvante :

— Et pourquoi doit-il savoir ? Pourquoi apprendre la vie ? Pourquoi ne pas s'arrêter dès le commencement, au lieu d'attendre les mauvaises passes perpétuelles, au bout desquelles il n'y aura jamais que le décès banal d'un pauvre homme ? Pourquoi pas continuer éternellement ce sommeil tout rose de nouveau-né ? Pourquoi pas mourir tout de suite, pour rester à jamais un petit enfant ?

Les grands yeux orageux foncissaient de plus en plus. Et, brusquement, elle se leva et se mit à marcher à grands pas dans la pièce. Une joie étrange peu à peu l'animait.

— Petits chaussons, dit-elle soudain presque à voix haute, je vais vous faire tout de même un beau cadeau de Noël, un cadeau magnifique, le plus beau des cadeaux de cette nuit !

Elle sourit :

— Ce sera une histoire très connue, un "fait divers" de tous les jours : "Les drames de la misère. Une mère qui se tue avec son enfant."

Combien de temps, retombée à sa place, la tête basse, resta-t-elle dans son agonie silencieuse, les dents serrées, les yeux fixes ? Quand elle releva le front, tout en elle était consommé. Droite et froide, elle s'avança vers le berceau.

— Maintenant, disait sa pensée, maintenant, petit enfant de Noël, rien ne peut plus te défendre du geste héroïque de mes deux mains... Héroïque, oui. Car ton cou tout brûlant de sommeil ne sera pas beaucoup plus gros sous mes doigts que celui d'un oiseau... Et pourtant, c'est toi, c'est toi qui vas être difficile à tuer. Ah ! que tu vas être difficile !... Pour moi, qui suis si gran-

de, la mort sera, au contraire, très aisée... Me voici, mon fils! Pour te sauver de mon beau présent, il faudrait, vois-tu, il faudrait qu'en cette minute un ange descendît auprès de ton berceau!

Elle s'était penchée avec brutalité. Et comme ses mains rampaient déjà et que son regard se rapprochait encore, tout à coup son cœur s'arrêta de battre. Car le bébé, réveillé depuis un moment, les pupilles dilatées sur l'invisible, faisait précisément cette petite grimace mystérieuse habituelle aux nouveau-nés et qu'on appelle *rire aux anges*. Et ses yeux encore sans regard avaient l'air de contempler ce que, plus tard, semblent revoir les êtres qui sont en train de mourir. En vérité, le sourire de ce poupon, c'était quelque chose de plus formidable, par cette nuit grouillante de légendes, que si quelqu'un d'Ailleurs eût surgi subitement et crié: "Ne le touche pas!"

Alors la jeune femme comprit avec horreur que l'Ange qu'elle avait évoqué, l'Ange du Destin était en effet descendu près du berceau pour s'interposer. Elle comprit qu'il y avait un mystère aussi grand que la mort dans les yeux des nouveau-nés. Elle comprit qu'on ne doit pas porter des mains ignorantes sur le cœur pantelant de la créature,

parce que la vie est malgré tout divine, et qu'il n'appartient à personne d'attendre à la divinité.

C'est pourquoi, le cœur enfin crevé, sanglotante, elle laissa tomber sur le berceau sa tête où les cheveux, en quelques heures, avaient dû blanchir. Et, la joue contre la bouche puérile qui, maintenant, cherchait à téter, réfugiée déjà près de son fils comme sur l'épaule d'un tout petit ami, elle se prit à lui dire, à travers le torrent de ses larmes, en le berçant convulsivement:

— O mon fils, ô mon pauvre mignon! Ta maman, qui n'a rien, t'a tout de même fait un cadeau pour ta première nuit de Noël. Dans ton petit chausson bleu, j'avais voulu te faire présent de la mort. Et voici que, pour la seconde fois, c'est la vie que je t'ai donnée...

Et comme l'admirable espérance humaine qui suffirait seule à réparer, pour ceux qui souffrent, le malheur de vivre, la reprenait malgré tout, elle souleva d'un geste vif le petit enfant dans ses bras, et, ouvrant son corsage pour l'allaiter, elle ajouta, riant presque, confiante, sauvée, comme si elle eût murmuré dans l'oreille fragile un secret merveilleux:

— Et puis, peut-être que toi, mon fils, tu seras très heureux?...

BOUDERIE

Par LA COMTESSE DE LA ROCHECANTIN

"**M**A petite maman, combien tu serais bonne
De mettre ton chapeau.
Je rêve de poupée en robe de Bretonne;
Sortons, il fait si beau!"

La mère, souriant, vers son enfant se penche,
Et la baisant au front:
"Les magasins sont tous fermés car c'est dimanche,"
Les bébés attendront!

Carmen n'insiste pas et la mère charmée:
"Chérie, embrasse-moi."
"Aujourd'hui c'est dimanche, et ma bouche est fermée,
Maman, tant pis pour toi."

MOTHERS

By CAROLINE BRETT MCLEAN

SHE lay in the white bed in the white hospital ward, staring at the wall with lusterless eyes that gave no indication of the rebellion and revolt in her heart. So she had lain since she had come back to full consciousness after that fierce physical anguish, in which she had gloried, since it was the precursor of a rapture which, she dimly felt, was too rare and divine to be attained without passing through cleansing purgatorial fires. She had passed through the fires, but Paradise had been denied her. Her child had just drawn breath and died.

The nurse came in presently and asked, as she had asked many times before, if she was not tired lying on her left side—could she not help her to turn on her right? But Rachel shook her head and the nurse passed on to the only other bed in the room. The other bed was similar in all respects to that upon which Rachel was lying, except—and this made all the difference in the world—that beside the occupant was a little soft, shapeless bundle. Rachel's left side was sore from lying upon it, but only at night, when the light burned low, did she relieve herself by turning upon her right. She could bear the pain of her side, but she could not bear to see the face of the woman whose child had lived while hers had died.

Yet, with a new quickness of imagination, she was always seeing that face. It took on no distinctive features; she could not tell whether it was dark or fair, young or old, comely or otherwise, but always it was radiant with the joy that had been denied her. Again and again, with all the strength of her

will, Rachel strove to banish from her mental vision that triumphant face, whose happiness mocked and deepened her own desolation, but it would not be banished.

One night, when she was getting stronger, that intrusive face was more than usually insistent: its triumphant joy more than ever tantalizing, until it seemed to Rachel that she could not longer bear it. When the nurse had left the ward after her last round for the night, Rachel slid cautiously out of bed and slipped softly across to the other cot. Almost directly above the head of the happy mother a gas jet burned low. With reckless hand Rachel turned it up to its full height, so that a stream of light fell full upon the sleeping face. Rachel's lips parted and hereyes dilated. It was the face of a mere girl and to Rachel seemed quite startlingly beautiful. The parted lips revealed white, even teeth; long lashes swept the round, flushed cheeks; a quantity of dark curly hair was scattered over the white pillow. Rachel looked and looked, then lowered the gas and crept tremblingly back to bed. To the dumb revolt that had been gathering in her heart since she was told that her child was dead was now added an overwhelming sense of injustice, which presently broke out in the cry:

"It ain't fair; it ain't fair at all."

For that girl with her living child beside her would have other children, while she, bereft, could never have another. The girl had youth, beauty, all the attributes that win love. Rachel had never had beauty, nor the joyousness of youth, nor love. The man she had married in her middle age, after

squandering her hardly-earned savings, had left her. Rachel had no hard feelings against him, nor any regret for him. Longing through all her maturity for a child, but deeming herself past the age of childbearing when she married, it had seemed to her a miracle when she knew that her desire would be granted. But now the miracle had been turned into mockery. To be given a child only that it should die—Rachel hid her face. "It's mean," she said to herself in the limited vocabulary of her kind. "If I could do things like—like Him, I would never do nothin' so mean," and then as the rounded, flushed young face rose again before her mental vision, the sense of injustice surged over her once more overwhelmingly.

"It ain't fair, it ain't fair, it ain't fair, nohow," she wailed.

Presently it grew slowly upon her consciousness that the look of triumphant joy, which in imagination she had pictured upon her neighbor's face, and which had so tantalized and mocked her, had not been upon the actual features. Could sleep have obliterated it? Or was it possible that it had never been there? Rachel knew that to some women motherhood did not seem the crown and summit of happiness that it seemed to her. Then she remembered that, in her semi-consciousness, many times in the night she had heard the child wail for some minutes before the mother awakened to attend to it. What sleep could seal her ears to the slightest sound or movement of the child which had never lain at her side? That thin, wailing cry in the night had brought home to Rachel more forcibly than anything else her own loss. Just at that moment the thin wail arose on the stillness of the room. Rachel waited, and her heart seemed to stand still. She would have affirmed with sincerity that the unheard cry went on for minutes and minutes, yet scarcely a second had elapsed since first hearing it, when she slipped out of bed, ran hastily to the other cot, picked up the wailing bundle and was back in her own bed, the child upon her breast. Her whole being

radiated with ecstasy. Her joy was unreasoning, unthinking. She fell asleep and her face was illumined.

When she awoke the room was bright, but it was still early. The nurse had not yet made her morning rounds. The child slept soundly in the hollow of her arm. Rachel looked down at the little head, with eyes that seemed to hold the tenderness of universal motherhood. Even in her sleep she had been conscious of that precious burden. She had thought that she knew what the rapture of motherhood would be, but her most golden imaginings had been colorless beside the actual joy of holding that little, warm, breathing body close against her own.

And then with a pang as great as her unreasoning joy had been she came back to actualities. She turned her head hurriedly to look at the neighboring cot. Its occupant lay in almost exactly the same position as when she had first looked upon her. She had not awakened, had not missed her baby from her side. She was too young to be a mother. How could one so young fathom motherhood's deeps of joy or weigh its responsibilities? Rachel's arm tightened about the child with an instinctively protecting movement. The little slip in which it was clothed had obviously seen much wear, and was a further sign to Rachel of the girl's inability to appreciate her motherhood. Friends, in pity of her circumstances, had offered her the baby clothes which had done service for their own children. But the preparation of tiny garments was one of the joys incident to motherhood, and Rachel would have none but what her own hands had fashioned. So she had sat late at night after her day's work stitching awkwardly and laboriously; for her hands, roughened by coarse labor, were clumsy in handling the fine materials which she had stinted herself to procure. Now as she looked at the yellowed slip clothing the child by her side, and thought of those unneeded garments, prepared with such infinite happiness of anticipation, some sense of the irony of life awoke in Rachel. All

the signs pointed to the advent of this child not being the vital thing her child's coming was to her, yet this had lived and hers had died.

But the nurse would be coming in soon and must not find the child with her. Already Rachel had planned a repetition of this borrowed joy, and feared forbiddance by those in authority. Reluctantly, she carried the child to the mother's cot. As she was about to turn back the bedclothes to lay him by her side, the long-lashed eyes opened suddenly and stared at Rachel uncomprehendingly. Then they rested on the child in her arms, and she raised herself on her elbow. For a moment Rachel was confused. By daylight and awake the girl's face seemed less spiritually lovely than it had seemed by gaslight and asleep, but it was still lovely enough to pierce the plain woman with a sharp pang of envy, and with the envy came a sudden feeling that it would be very bitter to have this more favored woman guess at her desolation.

"He was cryin' fit to wake the dead. You must be a mighty heavy sleeper. I thought he'd 'a' cried his head off." Her manner betokened nothing more than a petulant annoyance at being disturbed by the child's cries.

The mother said nothing. She held out her hands for the child, and then with lightning-like swiftness an idea was born in Rachel's mind.

"It was kind o' you to keep him for me while I was so sick," she said boldly. "An' you losin' your own. I guess I'll soon be able to keep him nights myself."

Rachel never knew how she got back to her own cot. She lay beneath the bedclothes trembling and glowing at the same time. She trembled at her daring, and glowed at the mere prospect of that daring accomplishing what she desired. The impulse to claim the child as her own had come to her overwhelmingly when she noted that the hands the mother held out were ringless. Beneath the bedclothes, Rachel fingered the symbol of her own respectability with a far greater degree

of complacency in its possession than when it had first glittered new upon her finger. The glitter had not lasted long. Purchased by the recreant husband out of her savings, its component parts had quickly become visible. The pleasure of the spinster in attaining the rank of wife had not in Rachel's case outlasted the brightness of her wedding ring.

But that satisfaction was restored now a thousandfold. Rachel exulted in the tie that gave her so eminent a superiority over the other woman. The impulse grew into inflexible resolve. The child should be hers. He was hers. And at that so wild an eagerness again to possess him swept over her that only fear of intervention by the nurse kept her from asserting her claim there and then. Raising herself in bed, she looked jealously across at the neighboring cot, and met the gaze of wide, dark eyes, half frightened, half sullen. Ordinarily, Rachel would not have been slow to respond to the unconscious appeal in that look. Now, dominated by her determination to possess the child, her answering gaze was stern and harsh. The girl must be made to realize that by her offense she had forfeited any right to consideration and kindness.

That day the child seemed to cry more than usual. Listening to that thin, insistent wail, Rachel had to clench her hands and call up every effort of her will to keep up her appearance of indifference toward the mother and baby in the presence of the nurse. But scarcely had the door closed behind her on her last visit for the night when she was out of bed and beside the cot. The child had been quiet for some time, and the mother lay with eyes closed, but as Rachel bent over her they opened suddenly. The eyes were so large and bright, so beautiful in form and color, that despite the absorbing intensity of her desire Rachel was stabbed anew with envy. The half-frightened look which seemed their normal expression deepened as they rested on the gaunt figure. There seemed something hungry, fierce, in the thin face bending over her. But be-

fore either woman could speak, the thin, fretful wail broke out again. Rachel had the child in her arms in a moment, hushing him with a soft, swaying movement of her body, her face so changed as she bent over him that the younger woman stared in amazement. Almost immediately the fretful wailing ceased.

"He knows he's with his mother, bless him," Rachel said, with a flashing, triumphant glance downward at the girl. She put her face close to the baby's, murmuring tender incoherencies, after the eternal fashion of mothers, for a moment or two.

"He was cryin' for his mother. He won't cry no more now," she said presently. Her voice was hard, loud, as if she would beat down any protest the mother might make.

The girl had sat up in bed. Her eyes were less frightened. The triumph in Rachel's look seemed to arouse opposition within her.

"He'd ought to cry harder'n ever then, if he's cryin' for his mother," she said almost pertly. Then with a quick recurrence to her former attitude, "As if a baby of that age could know anything." The timidity of her voice deprecated the pertness of a moment ago.

It seemed to Rachel that the girl had given her an opportunity of strengthening her position.

"They don't have to be very old to know things—who should be a mother and who shouldn't," she said. The girl's left hand, somewhat reddened and coarsened, but small and well shaped, lay on the coverlet. Rachel's condemning glance rested on it for an appreciable moment, and then, as the girl moved it hastily, sought the shrinking face.

"They know," she said, "an' I shouldn't wonder, after all, but what he was crying 'cause he was given to you to be minded. I guess I can mind him after this myself. It's thankful you should be that your own was taken. It wouldn't 'a' taken him long either to find out what mine has found out already."

And with that she carried the child

to her own bed. The sounds of suppressed crying which came to her for a long time detracted from the happiness which the child's soft weight on her breast brought to her. Willingly, Rachel would not have further hurt that poor, frightened little sinner, but in pursuance of her plan she was prepared to be pitiless if need be.

She lay awake for a long time that night. The mother's possible objections to her appropriation of the child did not trouble her. Her Rachel could deal with. But she feared the hospital authorities. She could not make them believe what almost she was making herself believe—that it was not her child that had died, but that of the outcast.

When the nurse came in, in the morning, the child was still asleep by Rachel's side.

"Let me keep him," Rachel said. There was an entreaty in her voice which the nurse could not understand, but she had no objection to make. She was carelessly sorry for this woman, who had taken her child's death needlessly hard, according to the nurse's way of thinking, and if it comforted her to take care of this baby, why, nobody had anything to say against it, if the mother hadn't.

So as the days wore on, Rachel had almost entire charge of the child. Once or twice, when the nurse was in the room, the mother had come to her and taken him from her arms. In the presence of the nurse, Rachel dared not refuse to give him up, as she almost certainly otherwise would have done. To take him boldly from her, as if by right, was perhaps her reprisal for the attitude of aloofness and superiority which the married woman maintained.

But in general she was a humble, shrinking little creature, with no spirit for retaliation, almost abjectly anxious to placate her companion, and not seemingly inclined to dispute her appropriation of the child. As Rachel slowly began to perceive this, the attitude she had set herself to maintain toward the girl abated. She was still made to feel herself an outcast, but

Rachel no longer maintained unpromising silence when they were alone. True, her talk ran chiefly upon the enormity of offenses against the social code, but the girl seemed to be thankful for even that sign of interest, though she would listen to the discourses with hanging head.

"Some women get married and don't seem none the worse," Rachel said one day, as they both sat together in a sunny window, the child asleep on Rachel's lap. She looked suddenly at the girl and found her eyes fixed upon the child, with a look in them she had never seen there before. The look was at once yearning and reluctant, as of the dawning of mother love, repressed and kept down by shame, yet struggling for life. Rachel's heart contracted with a quick fear. She had begun to feel herself secure in the belief that this mother did not feel any love for her child. If she should come to love him, no consideration of the effect the child's existence would have upon her future could keep her from claiming him.

"No woman never gets over a thing like that," she said, her voice sounding suddenly harsh. "If she marries and the husband knows it, do you think he'd let her forget it? An' if he doesn't know it she'll live in fear that she'll be found out, and afterwards no respectable people 'ud have anything to do with her." Her eyes, with the old sternness, rested full upon the flushing face. She had been too lenient with her; had not sufficiently emphasized the gulf that yawned between her own respectability and the girl's outcast condition, with the result that the latter had dared to harbor the feelings of a respectable married woman toward her offspring. With a look and gesture as if she were shaking off some noxious thing, Rachel, carrying the child, left the girl in sole possession of the sunny window.

Presently a further problem presented itself to Rachel. The younger woman grew more quickly convalescent than her companion. The nurse began to talk of her departure from the hospi-

tal. Rachel lived in something approaching agony. In the state of high tension in which she had lived since the conception of her scheme she had been oblivious to her bodily condition, but she knew that she was not considered sufficiently recovered to leave the institution. And her renewal of coldness had not been able to banish that new and startling look in the girl's eyes. It had deepened as the days went by. When in due time a definite day for her departure was fixed, Rachel imagined that the look changed to one of triumph. With that new quickness of imagination which had come to her, she pictured the girl reveling in the thought of her escape from the thralldom of her sister's scorn, free to give full play to her feelings. In her utter silence as to her impending departure Rachel detected, too, a feeling inimical to her own plan. She did not stop to consider that her own attitude toward the girl was sufficient to explain that silence.

On the day before her departure, as she sat in her favorite seat by the window, Rachel approached her.

"What are you goin' to do when you're out?" she asked, trying to speak casually.

Without looking at Rachel the girl shook her head.

"I'd advise you to go right away to some place where nobody don't know you," Rachel pursued. Her voice was as entreating as if she were craving some boon. "With the child dead, you'll forget in a little while that anything ever happened. They'll be lots of men'll want to marry you—yer so good lookin'. But I'd get as far away from this place as ever I could, as far as ever I could." The note of conciliation in her voice was pitiful.

Before the girl could make any answer the child, who was asleep on Rachel's bed, awoke and cried out. With a quick look at Rachel the girl ran across to the bed and picked him up. Rachel followed as quickly as she could.

"Give him to me—" she began hotly, then her arms dropped to her side.

"If ye'd like to keep him for a while,

you may," she amended—the pitiful note of conciliation sounded in her voice again—"bein' your last day an' all." Her laugh was a little hysterical.

The girl carried the child to her seat by the window. She had not looked at Rachel, had not seemed to hear her. All her being seemed intent upon the child. Sitting on the edge of her bed, Rachel watched her bending over him, and the sight was like the turning of a knife in her heart. She ached with desire to take him from her, but she was afraid to make the demand. She could no longer assume, in dealing with the mother, the easy-matter-of-course attitude which she had taken from the first. That attitude had been possible only through the girl's willingness to concede her claim. But with the awakening of the mother love that willingness would no longer exist. Rachel had no doubt that the love had awakened. Every line in the girl's slender figure seemed instinct with motherhood as she bent over her child. In her attitude of open adoration, Rachel saw triumph over herself, an exulting consciousness of the freedom so near at hand.

Rachel did not claim the child that night, but when she was sure that the mother slept she left the ward and went to the nurses' sitting room. It was a small hospital, with a discipline not particularly strict. Rachel's nurse was alone in the sitting room.

"I came to tell you that I'm goin' tomorrow," Rachel said.

"Going? Going where? Mercy on us, not out! Why, you're crazy; you're a sick woman yet!"

"I'm goin' in the mornin'," Rachel said doggedly, "an' I want to go early, before anyone's up." She looked straight into the nurse's eyes. "I'm goin'," she said.

The nurse looked perturbed. "Well, if you will— But I won't take the responsibility. Wait a minute. I'll see the surgeon."

She darted off, to reappear in a few minutes with the house surgeon in her wake, a boyish-looking fellow whose youthful appearance seemed at strange odds with his obvious sense of the

seriousness and responsibility of his position.

"Nurse tells me you want to leave."

"Yes," said Rachel.

"But you are not well enough." He took her wrist, holding his finger on the pulse for a moment. "Indeed you are not." His voice was authoritative.

Rachel's doggedness gave place to pleading. She looked up at the boyish surgeon with an anguish of entreaty in her eyes.

"Sir, I'll be far worse stayin' than goin'. I'm—I want to go. I want to go; I want to go," she said in a wail, failing suddenly of words with which to set forth her need. Her eyes continued to entreat him dumbly, and the gravity on the boyish face gave place to a great compassion.

"You have friends to go to, someone to look after you until you are strong?" His voice was very gentle.

"Yes, yes, yes," she said joyfully, scarcely comprehending what he had asked. Then as the sense of it came to her, she threw back her head. "But I'm well enough. An' I'm to go in the mornin' early, early?"

"As early as you like," said the young surgeon, still in that gentle voice.

She went early, very early, stepping softly as she made her preparations, lest the girl should awake and, surmising her intentions, endeavor to defeat them by delaying her own departure. Rachel's ideas as to what her mode of procedure would be were not very definite; only that she would have the child—that determination was unshakable. Her exulting glance rested on the girl's face, lovely in the unconsciousness of sleep. She was no longer afraid of her. She felt herself capable of overcoming any difficulties that the girl might make. Her step was buoyant as she left the hospital.

She had to wait a long time before the girl came, but the time did not seem long to Rachel. Loitering around the hospital gates, a thousand pleasurable anticipations of the joy the future held for her filled her mind to the exclusion of all else, even of the means by which that joy should be hers.

She came at last, and when Rachel's eyes rested on her face she knew that the difficulties she had told herself she would overcome, no matter by what means, would not be encountered. The girl was afraid. As she came lingeringly through the gate, carrying the child, she cast one wild look behind, as if she fain would fly back again to the shelter of the walls that had been a temporary sanctuary from the cold verdict of the world. A look pathetically eager in its timid hope of kindness came over her face when she saw Rachel.

But Rachel, exulting in the timorousness that made her own object easy of accomplishment, had no room in her heart for kindness.

"Give him to me," she said abruptly, almost fiercely, and without further words took the child from the girl's passive arms. For a moment they looked at one another, Rachel triumphant, flushed, strong, the girl the picture of frightened helplessness, overborne by the other's strength.

"An' think yerself lucky," Rachel said at the end of that moment, with an involuntary concession to the appeal in the girl's eyes. "You *are* lucky," she laid stress on the words, "to be able to start out free. There's yer road." She pointed in an opposite direction to that which she herself intended to take. "An' I'd lose no time in gettin' away as far as ever I could," she said.

She lost no time in getting away herself after giving the advice. As she spoke, she had seen the fear that had been in the girl's eyes give place slowly to that hungry look of yearning which she had learned to dread. She almost ran until she reached a nearby corner; then she glanced back, and there was the girl standing just where she had left her. The distance was too great to be able to distinguish her features, but Rachel knew just the look that was in her eyes. She gave an exultant little laugh and pressed the child to her bosom in an ecstasy. She was safe now; there were many turnings here. Even if the girl followed her, she could not know which one she had taken.

Not far off was her home, a little sloping ceiled room at the top of a tall lodging-house. Rachel hurried on faster, eager to reach it. She had been lonely there often, a loneliness which her brief matrimonial experience had done nothing to dispel. But she would never be lonely again. She had her heart's desire, something to love, something to work for.

She stopped presently to look at the child. That swelling joy in her heart, so great as to be almost pain, must have outlet by feasting her eyes on her treasure. Drawing aside the thin covering that hid the little face, Rachel met the wide gaze of eyes that seemed preternaturally large and bright. Hastily she veiled the face again. Her hand trembled; she felt stricken. That bright, wide gaze, remarkable in so young a child, conveyed to Rachel a terrible reproach. So the despoiled young mother might have looked at her.

And then Rachel came to herself. The obsession of desire that had been upon her fell away. By her own longing and yearning she could gauge the enormity of her offense in robbing this mother of her first-born. It would be heartbreaking to go back to the old, lonely life now, shorn of hope, but she could not do the terrible thing she had contemplated.

She was not more than a dozen yards from the door of her lodging, which she had sought so eagerly, but she turned back the way she had come, walking with leaden feet, looking about her as she walked. After a while, at the turning of a street corner, she saw what she was looking for. The girl stood at some little distance, as if undecided which way to take in her search. That she was searching Rachel had no doubt, and for a brief moment the desire to evade her, to hold fast to her happiness, rose strong in her heart again. But the girl had turned and seen her, and was running toward her with swift, light steps that seemed to eat up the distance between them. Rachel stood still. Her arms clasped the child convulsively. As she watched that slender, flying figure, graceful even

in its haste, the old bitterness swept over her again. This girl had so much that was desirable, so much that she had not and never had had. Oh, it was hard to give up what would have made her happiness!

The mother came nearer. She was panting. There was no timorousness about her now, nothing but a desperate eagerness, a wild reaching out for her child, a radiant happiness covering the receding fear of loss. When she was quite close to Rachel she stopped suddenly. Neither woman spoke for a moment or two.

"Take him; he's yours," Rachel said at last harshly. "Course you knowed that all along. Mine—mine died."

The girl had snatched the baby and was bending over him in a rapture that was oblivious to everything, but at the breaking voice she looked up at Rachel with the infinite compassion that a happy mother bestows upon a bereaved one.

"I'm so sorry for you," she said clearly, in her soft voice.

But the words had scarcely left her lips when the timorousness, which a greater emotion had momentarily banished, seemed to return a hundredfold. She shrank from Rachel's look.

Rachel was gazing at her intently. The compassion which she had kept down so rigorously, her woman's pity for the girl's youth, was stirring in her heart.

"You have friends—relations to go to?" she asked abruptly.

The girl shook her head.

"What are you goin' to do?"

Again that hopeless shake of the head. The dark eyes, wandering aimlessly about, came to rest on Rachel's face, the eyes of a child, despite her woman's experience.

Then Rachel's arms went about her swiftly. The conventional abhorrence of her offense was swept away. The girl was poorer, weaker than herself.

"Come home with me," she whispered.

The girl gave a great start. "But I'm not fit—I'm bad, I'm—" she hung her head over the child.

"We'll both love him," Rachel said jubilantly, "an' love each other." She kissed the soft cheek. The grayness that had been gathering about her broke suddenly into brightness. She was amazed to find that her love for the child included love for the mother.

"Let's hurry and get home," she said.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LEANDRE

THERE are cases when blanched hair and faded faces are more of a lie than dyed hair and rouged cheeks.

To assimilate impressions and to find forms of expression—what else is life? Marriage broadens the woman and narrows the man.

Hélas! The naive tragedy of a first love! It leaves a faint, frail bitterness in our hearts . . . that subtly and exquisitely seasons our future experiences.

If you are happy you can never be unusual.

Impulse is subconscious intelligence.

A woman must not expect happiness in marriage. But she can be ever certain of finding in it the misery most dear to her heart.

SYMPHONIES AND OYSTERS

By GRACE ELLERY CHANNING

THE improvidence of the Millers had long been a proverb with Mrs. Miller's relations and friends. Miller himself might be said to have no relations, and his friends were of his own kind, accepting Alice's and his conduct as not only the natural but as the only possible conduct for two young people under the circumstances. Clearly, with an insufficient income the only thing to do is to get what one can out of it. But Alice's relatives, every one of whom had an amply sufficient income, frankly admitted that Alice had married outside both their world and their understanding.

This did not, however, prevent their taking an interest in Miller's promotion when it finally came, or wondering what effect it would have upon the young people.

"If Alice had shown any judgment in the past," lamented Alice's Aunt Henrietta to Alice's Aunt Rosamond, "one would now feel some hope. It nearly doubles their income. And wouldn't one have thought," she added plaintively, "that being left an orphan so early and obliged to earn her living would have taught her the value of money, if anything could? But she never managed to put by anything before her marriage, and she would marry a poor bank clerk without waiting for his promotion."

"All the more you would think she would have seen the necessity for strict economy after marriage," answered Alice's Aunt Rosamond, settling her handsome furs comfortably. "I talked a little with her about it at first—you know Alice is difficult to talk to—and she assured me quite calmly that it was

no use trying to save on their income. As if it weren't always of use! And one could always save, however little, by sacrifices."

"Oh, if you talk of sacrifices!" Mrs. Henrietta threw up the phrase, as it were, in her beringed hands, making little diamond rainbows which Mrs. Rosamond's glance followed with envious appreciation. From her standpoint she, too, had an insufficient income it did not allow for diamond rainbows, and therefore, not being Alice, she went without them. "If you talk of sacrifices," repeated Mrs. Henrietta, "the sacrifices I've made for them! The first year they were married I sent Alice exactly what my Symphony tickets would have cost. I had decided not to go that year and I explained to her, delicately, of course—Alice is so touchy—and told her I knew a young household had many inevitable necessary expenses. My dear! She wrote back thanking me for the treat I had given them—they had gone to the *Symphonies*! She added they meant to make a point of going hereafter—they found it *such a rest*!"

Mrs. Rosamond made an inarticulate reply, with one fascinated eye on the rainbows.

"The next Christmas," continued Mrs. Henrietta with resignation, "I sent Alice a little cheque, telling her plainly I knew it was the season of heavy coal and gas bills, and I preferred to make my charities at home. Her reply to that was to invite me to a first cup of tea out of a Canton set Henry had found and in which she had invested my kind gift! Blandford tells me Henry really has a taste and under-

standing for that kind of thing—but what can you do with people like that?”

“He seems to have a good many tastes above his condition,” said Mrs. Rosamond severely. “I suppose it is what attracted Alice. I know he has gone on bringing her flowers, as if they were still engaged. Oh, it’s a pretty sentiment, of course, but the question is: has a man a right to indulge pretty sentiments that cost money, when he doesn’t even keep up a life-insurance?”

“Well!”—Mrs. Henrietta’s tone had a patient inflection not to be exhausted by the worst Alice was able to do—“I have steadily urged Blandford to use all his influence to get Henry the promotion—you know Blandford is a director as well as stockholder—and he did. After all, Alice is his cousin. But he says it probably won’t do a bit of good, and that he won’t be surprised if Henry takes to collecting pottery and Alice to a box at the Opera. Blandford tells me he quite often meets them, poor as they are, at Huysmann’s having oysters, and while it is true that one plate of oysters doesn’t ruin anyone, you know what that kind of thing kept up amounts to.”

Mrs. Rosamond nodded an implication that she knew only too well.

“It shows such a wrong spirit,” she said, rising conclusively and wrapping the furs closer about her, with a last vague prediction that—well, they should see.

But the extraordinary thing was that they did not see; or rather, what there was to be seen was so little what they were expecting to see that it took them some time to realize they were seeing it. For Miller did not take to collecting pottery, nor Alice to a box at the Opera. Instead, they suddenly gave up the Symphonies, and Miller ceased to haunt the shops of his constant affection, permitting himself hardly a wistful, yearning glance toward some piece of rare Satsuma or old Canton as he hurried to or from the bank. This was all the more a noble exhibition of self-control on his part, as never before had he been so constantly under fire, so to speak; for never before had he so consistently

plodded his pedestrian way past those places of seduction. He had always taken the tram as a matter of course; now he walked—to save his fares.

For the incredible had happened: the Millers had all at once become economical. The increase in Miller’s salary was so considerable that it went to their heads. For the first time in all their single or married lives there was really something to save, and the instinct to save it, latent in most sons and daughters of the dust of earth, sprang alive and fully-grown in them. The idea of a home of their own—by which, of course, they meant a house of their own, for the home they had already—took possession of them with the force of another instinct; it utterly displaced the small flat, the hitherto witness of their happy improvidences. They began to look up little suburban lots, and to plan little suburban cottages, and to lay out little suburban lawns and gardens and the passion for “putting by” seized them with a mutual ardor. Miller walked in all weathers, and Alice, who was not fond of housework, relinquished even the little help she had ever hired, and bent the admirable intelligence which had made her a successful teacher to the far more ungrateful study of domestic economics. She became a professional saver. They renounced all the little oyster suppers, and Alice fed Miller ham and cold mutton with a steadiness approaching inhumanity.

One evening Miller looked at her across the table with compunction. It was one of their countless small anniversaries—they had as many as Italy—which had hitherto kept gay the path of their married life.

“I wanted to bring you flowers,” he said. “It’s the first time I ever didn’t, but roses—well, they’re a dollar a dozen, and violets—” he reddened a little, being unhardened to calculations of this kind.

“I’m glad you didn’t,” Alice rushed to his rescue. “The wanting to is just as good, and I do think we ought to—to give up all that now, until we have our own garden.”

“I hope there’ll be an oyster bed in

it," Miller responded, suppressing a sigh as he looked wistfully at the platter of cold mutton flanked by boiled potatoes. All Alice's intelligence had not done better for her than that. Out of the entire list of their renunciations, manlike, her husband missed most of all the convivial little suppers. He even wondered if—

"Oysters," said Alice, with a little new hardness, "are—I forget how much now—but, anyway, they're a luxury, and I thought we were both agreed—"

"Yes, yes—of course; that's all right," said Miller quickly, attacking the mutton and trying to look as though he liked it. Alice was perhaps the sharper with him in that she had certain promptings of her own unregenerate nature; for, after all, life as they lived it now was not gay.

But, if not gay, it was impeccably respectable; not only approving consciences but approving relatives testified to that.

"Isn't it splendid," said Mrs. Henrietta to Mrs. Rosamond, "the way they have both come out under this opportunity! Blandford says he won't be surprised to see Henry a director yet."

"Ye-es; if anything, I think Alice is almost overdoing it," Mrs. Rosamond replied thoughtfully. "She never gives one tea any more—and is doing all her own housework—and one never sees them anywhere. Don't you think she's grown a good deal older?"

"Well—it's a good fault," responded Mrs. Henrietta ambiguously. "When they have a house of their own they can take it more easily."

A house of their own; yes, that was now the thing they lived for. Alice had furnished it throughout, built a garden round it—she had even thought that with a house and garden there would be only one thing left to wish for; in that thought her face often through the hours of household drudgery lost its new hardness and grew tenderer than it had ever been. Unluckily, Miller did not see it. But the knowledge of the plump little hoard growing monthly

in his own bank kept him up and made him weigh very carefully the difference between a dollar-and-a-half hat and a two-dollar one; once he would have cheerfully plumped down two dollars and a half and thought no more about it. They both denied themselves things with the same joyous energy with which they had formerly indulged in them. At least at first; later they did it with a joyless but dogged persistence.

"Remember," Alice was forever warning, "it's our first chance. So long as even by scraping our lives down to the bone we couldn't save enough to count, what was the use? But now—there's every use."

She spoke, as Miller had noticed more than once of late, with a curious effect of being her own censorious Aunt Henrietta. He had also noticed a certain colorlessness in Alice which he had never till now been aware of; he reflected that she must need brightening up, but he dared not suggest it, for he could think of no brightening process that did not cost money. Alice, for her part, had been struck with a certain loss of youth in Henry; she supposed they were growing older, in fact, and it only filled her with a new and wistful hurry for the home to grow old in comfortably, and before it was too late. Of the two, it was she who aged the faster, since nothing, as a witherer, can compare for a moment with the steady application of the higher faculties toward the lessening, the cheapening of all things, an unbroken contemplation of a universal minimum. There is no profession which is not gay compared with that of the professional "saver." No sense of proportion can long endure against it, and Alice, in her extreme conscientious desire to do her full share on these barren terms, was not infrequently led to save her husband's money at the expense of his soul—whose portal was his luckless, ill-fed and mutton-fed body. Constantly now she reiterated her philosophy of the substitution of the idea for the thing. Miller tried unsuccessfully to apply it to oysters, fried

or stewed, as they assaulted shamefully his olfactory nerves from the doorway of Huysmann's; the creed always remained inadequate. The oyster had become the type of renunciation. Even Mrs. Henrietta began to feel that they were perhaps "overdoing it."

"We don't see you any more at Huysmann's," said Blandford, with the rich man's good nature, stopping to shake hands with his cousin's husband on the bank steps. "Settled down—regular old married folks, eh?"

"No," said Miller, flushing a little, "we—we've rather given up that sort of thing."

"Well, I dare say you're wise," Blandford answered casually. "Make hay while the sun shines—and they do say there's a bit of a financial flurry ahead." The two were strolling up the Avenue now. "Won't touch us, though. Seen that old blue bowl?" he asked in another tone.

Miller glanced with yearning eyes and as they stood there the odor of oysters drifted across. It was his fate that Huysmann's should be opposite the old china shop.

"Mighty fine piece, isn't it?" Blandford observed. "Doesn't tempt you? Kind of thing you used to care for, rather, isn't it? Do you take this car? No? Not even on a night like this? Well, I do. So long, and my love to Alice." He swung himself aboard, and fifteen minutes after was recounting the incident to his mother with a shrug. It was then that Mrs. Henrietta, protesting with all her diamond rainbows, *did hope* they were not going to turn out *stingy*.

Miller walked on, buttoning his rather worn coat closer. It was a somewhat cool dusk, and Blandford had somehow cast a further chill over it. Or possibly the blue bowl and the oysters in combination had done it. At all events, he was aware of a violent reaction, extending to everything that had made his life for a long time past. Were Alice and he a pair of fools, after all? he wondered. That home of their own, it was still indefinitely far ahead, and meanwhile—how all the

salt had gone out of life! He had gotten himself safely past the pottery shop and Huysmann's only to find himself in front of the florist's which, fitly to carry out the scheme of temptation, lay just beyond. A mighty longing came upon him to just go in and buy something—anything, he didn't care what—just to spend money. He had a mind to go back and get a stew, and then buy that blue bowl and fill it with roses for Alice. But to get the oysters without Alice seemed mean; and if he got the bowl and the roses—how would Alice look? He knew very well how Alice would look. And yet Alice used to like it, he rather wistfully recalled. Then suddenly he remembered what Blandford had said about a financial flurry. "I must look into that tomorrow," he said to himself, as he pulled himself together and walked briskly on, the careful financier once more.

He decided he would say nothing to Alice about the promised flurry—no use to worry her; and the bland and smiling rebuff which met his timid inquiries at the bank next day caused him to congratulate himself on his acuteness. A storm—even a flurry—with the financial barometer like this!—my dear sir! Some little rumors of a slight, an expected change of weather, there might be; that was in the nature of things. There had been too much prosperity, overinvestment, inflation, no doubt—a barometer set at "fair" rather too long; a *little* flurry there might be—it might even be a good thing if there *were* a little flurry; such things cleared the air—took in sails—had a conservative effect; but as for anything *more* than a flurry! But even if there were a dozen flurries, storms, cyclones—surely Mr. Miller didn't distrust his own bank? Wasn't he in a position to know its workings and to be aware that it never touched anything less stable than the Bunker Hill Monument? A lack of confidence in the public could be understood, condoned, but surely the bank had a right to expect from its own employees . . . Miller apologized.

"No," he said firmly to Alice, who had somehow got wind of that gathering flurry, "I couldn't withdraw from my own bank—under any circumstances. Besides, there *isn't* any safer bank. Why, we are *soliciting* business; no bank would dare to do that if it weren't perfectly secure."

"Wouldn't they?" asked Alice ignorantly.

"Of course not. Besides, there's your cousin—he would give me a hint if it weren't all right; of course it's all right."

That he was not the only person who had been needlessly nervous he somewhat comfortingly could observe as the days went by. A number of others called to ask questions, and Miller's eager ears drank in greedily the convincing assurances offered to others. It was just the general unrest in the city which, like a vagrant wind (only they did not employ this poetic image at the bank) blew rumors here and blew them there. Politics, politics—wasn't it election year?—always unsettling. The inquirers to a man ended by leaving their money on the counter; to a woman, indeed, for the last depositor Miller saw before the closing hour was a little, old woman who, having grown anxious, had withdrawn her little old account from another bank and now came with sweet simplicity to ask if this was safer.

"Safe, madam, as safe as the pyramids," said the bland official, as he answered the question for the twentieth time, and made out the deposit slip. And Miller answered to himself a question which he also had been putting to himself for the twentieth time—whether or not to deposit his salary as usual, Saturday being pay day.

He answered it in the affirmative; the taking of the old woman's money settled that for him.

That was about twelve o'clock. At one, Blandford, passing hurriedly through the office, nodded to his cousin's husband. Blandford was shortly followed by a number of other gentlemen whom Miller recognized. A directors' meeting, evidently, thought he,

as they passed behind the green doors which veiled the inner mysteries from simple souls like himself. At half-past one the gentlemen filed out again, and this time Blandford forgot to nod to him as he passed. At two the bank, with the old woman's money inside, had closed its doors.

That was the fact uppermost in the chaos of Miller's mind as he stumbled homeward, an indefinite period of time after. He had no longer any sense of time. Things had been said; orders had been issued; he had been informed that the president could not possibly see anybody; an interminable number of useless things had been said and done, out of which he brought away nothing but a stunned sense that everything was over. That much had been made clear; the smash was complete. Whatever might be gathered from the dust when it settled would be by the grace of God and in His good time—in other words, in some future so remote that it meant nothing to Miller, nothing to anybody, so far as he could apprehend. As he walked up the Avenue he reeled. *They had taken the old woman's money*; that was what he kept repeating to himself. And after that—Alice's and his; that was as far as he was able to reason. He felt no loyalty toward the institution; there was nothing left to feel loyal to. They had taken the old woman's money. They had taken his work and given him money for it, and then they had taken the money and along with it his and Alice's life—all they had been putting into it. Those complacent gentlemen in silk hats and silky consciences were the institution. How long had they known this was coming? How long had Blandford known? Miller stopped and ground his heel into the pavement in a vain effort to steady himself. The strain and tension of all that useless effort—his and Alice's—came over him. It was not their money which was gone; it was their youth. All the things he had passed every night of his life; all the things Alice and he might have had and hadn't; all they might have done, all they had forgone, denied themselves,

impoverished themselves in, rose tauntingly about him now. Alice! what would Alice do? As he passed Huysmann's they were frying oysters as usual, and his faintness—it was long past supper-time—turned to fierce craving. He reflected bitterly on all those oyster suppers they might just as well have had in all these years, and on the endless cold mutton, and he felt a rage of resentment. Laces and velvets and silks in the next window! Alice might just as well as not have had a silk gown and one of those fool feather boas. He stumbled on. A policeman turned and looked suspiciously after him.

"Look here, my man!" said he, "you want to walk straighter than that or you'll find yourself in trouble."

Miller stopped and, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, looked dazedly about him. In front of him was the florist's—the windows heaped with ferns, bowls of violets and tall vases of long-stemmed roses, just as they had been as he walked by them every night on his way home—walking to save carfare. Miller laughed aloud, and turning the handle of the door walked in.

"How much a dozen?" he asked the clerk, pointing to the roses.

"Three dollars," said the clerk, coolly looking him over.

"Give me a dozen," said Miller, reaching into his pocket. As he drew out a bill he glanced at it.

"Make it two dozen," he said, tossing the ten on the counter.

The clerk, his manner changed to a respectful alacrity, quickly made up and handed him the big paper-covered mass with a bow. As Miller walked off with it, the watchful policeman noticed that he walked straight enough now. And he did not begin to talk to himself until he had turned off the Avenue into the deserted street which led to his house.

"What would Alice say?" he had been asking himself all the way. Now he answered himself aloud. "She will say you are crazy—and perhaps you are," came as an encouraging addition. He began to stumble again. It would

be all over with Alice now, after this—after she had pared life down to the roots; but what did it matter? He stumbled up the steps and fumbled with the key in the hole. Finally he got it in and stumbled again in the hall; that was the confounded darkness—the one burner was turned down to the lowest point. Alice was saving gas. Miller smiled sardonically and turned the jet up to the fullest; then he went into the dining room and turned that gas up too. At the same moment Alice came in from the kitchen.

"Where have you been?" she began; then the little tired housekeeper's wrinkles in her face smoothed into amazement at sight of the great blaze of roses, as Miller tore the paper from them.

"Why, Henry!—what in the world—" Then a sudden light came all over her face; she grew young and brilliant with excitement. "Henry—they have promoted you again!"

Miller burst out laughing.

"Promoted!— Oh, yes! Here—" he thrust the roses into his wife's arms. "I bought them with my last ten-dollar bill. The bank's gone under and we're ruined—ruined, I tell you! Well, what are you staring at me for? Can't you understand—ruined? I gave three dollars a dozen for those roses—six dollars for the lot; there's the change!" He drew out a handful of silver, flung it on the table, sank suddenly into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

Alice sank into the opposite chair. The roses, fallen from her grasp, lay in a great heap between them, and over it she looked across at her husband, repeating mechanically:

"Ruined!"

"Yes, I said ruined," said Miller in a loud voice, lifting a pair of blood-shot eyes and going on incoherently. "R-u-i-n-e-d! I spent my last ten-dollar bill on those. I came near buying that blue bowl, too—and an oyster stew. God! how I wanted that stew! What have you got—mutton?" he shivered with disgust. "But I didn't get the oysters because you weren't there. I only got the roses.

"You'd better make the most of them—they're all you'll get. That's what our five years' starving and grinding has come to. I paid six dollars for them—by Jove!" he broke off with an odd quaver and sat shivering and muttering.

Alice had sat dumb. Miller still had his hat on, and for a moment she had wondered, with unimaginable horror, whether he was drunk. She had never seen a drunken man at close quarters, but this might be the way they acted. Then, as he went on talking, her face turned gray; *she knew*.

Miller noticed nothing. He continued to keep his face buried in his hands and to mutter to himself. He kept on muttering when he heard Alice get up and go out of the room. He knew by the perfume that she had left the roses behind. Oh, of course, she didn't want them! He started with violence when someone touched him, and turned his bloodshot eyes upon his wife—but she did not think him drunk now; the intelligence of the heart had returned to Alice. She had on her hat and jacket.

"Henry," she said, and through the trembling of her voice ran a strength and sweet common sense—the common sense that saves—"pick up that money and come this minute—and have that oyster stew!"

It was some months later when Blandford again encountered his cousin and her husband. He had, to tell the truth, not been seeking opportunities. Mrs. Henrietta had written—she said she thought it better not to go—and had expressed to Alice all their feelings in four finely crossed pages of notepaper; how much they also had suffered, how deeply they felt for Alice and Henry, how they regretted, how Blandford had longed to drop a hint, but loyalty to his bank forbade it. It had been "a question of honor," and Mrs. Henrietta wound up almost tearfully; but Alice had never replied. Certainly Alice, her aunt decided, did not bear reverses well. Blandford had seen them for the

first time this night at a Symphony, and dropping into Huysmann's later, he found them already ensconced at one of the little tables. It was a genuine relief to him, and after an awkward moment he walked bravely across. Alice was thinner, but her enigmatic smile was still a pretty thing to see, and it struck Blandford she had rather more color—or maybe it was a new hat. Miller, too, was thin and balder, but looked not ill-content.

"I'm delighted to see you," said Blandford with genuine warmth, "and delighted to see you here. Saw you at the Symphony. How are things, Henry? I've been wanting to look you up, but I haven't had an hour, and we don't see you down town any more."

"No," said Miller laconically, as he poured with great care one-half the tiny flask of wine into Alice's glass.

"The fact is," said Blandford, with desperate frankness, "I was afraid the cyclone might have struck you even harder than it did us. I wanted—most awfully—to give you a hint in time, but I couldn't—you see for yourself I couldn't. One single incautious word would have done the business—and I was bound to the bank. I'm delighted to see," he added honestly, "that things aren't so bad as I feared."

Miller finished pouring the other half of the wine into his own glass with great deliberation before he lifted his head and contemplated his cousin by marriage.

"I don't know how bad you feared," he observed tranquilly. "We merely lost everything. I've got a trifling job on the *Gazette* and Alice has a few pupils. We're down to bedrock. That's why you saw us at the Symphony, and"—he paused with a trifling effect of emphasis—"that's why we're here." He helped Alice to a ladleful of oysters, and then helped himself. Blandford was taken aback for once.

"Oh," he managed to stammer at last, "so that's why, is it?"

"Yes," reiterated Miller quietly; "that's why."

BROMLEY'S VISIT

By HORACE HAZELTINE

WHEN, on alighting at our station from the three-ten train from Forty-second street, with Bromley just back of me, I saw Mildred waiting in the new Glens Falls buckboard, I knew that something was wrong.

We had arranged that morning for Robert, our coachman-gardener and man-of-all-work, to drive down for Bromley and me in all the panoply of his new livery; and we had rather counted on the impression the outfit would make on Bromley; especially when I should drive the dainty, high-stepping mare homeward with Robert, his arms folded, perched smartly on the rumble behind. And here was Mildred holding the reins and no Robert anywhere in sight.

In spite of Mildred looking charmingly pretty in her blue linen frock and white leghorn hat with blue roses which matched her eyes, I could have sworn; for instantly I foresaw what was to follow, and how the whole smart effect we had counted on was to be turned into a burlesque—for I, with my long legs contorted and my knees up to my chin, must occupy that skeleton-supported cushion at the back of the vehicle.

Mildred waved a white-gloved hand to us and smiled as merrily as though our best-laid scheme had not gone a-gley.

"I'm delighted to see you, Mr. Bromley," she said in tones of warm welcome as Bromley, straw hat in hand, stood bowing at the edge of the platform. "Step right in here beside me—and mind the canopy. It is a little awkward. Ah, there you are! Stevie,

dear"—this to me, of course—"you'll have to content yourself with the rumble. Can you take Mr. Bromley's suit-case there, too?"

This was another straw. There was but one place for Bromley's suit-case on the rumble and that was under my feet, which would raise my knees to the level of my hat brim. I demurred at being asked to contort myself into a semblance of a monkey on a stick.

"My dear," I protested in as mildly pleading a tone as I could command, "if you don't very much mind I think you might better accommodate the suit-case in front."

But she smiled at me her very sweetest smile.

"Oh, no, dear," she objected; "it would be in Mr. Bromley's way here; there's lots more room at the back."

And while Bromley—confound him!—made not the smallest scintilla of a suggestion about caring for his own property, I flung the obnoxious suit-case across the swaying slats and proceeded to make a jackknife of my legs.

As Mildred barely touched Judith's back with the tip-end of the whip lash, and the mare cavorted and pawed the air for a second preliminary to a start, I heard a station lounge laugh, and I knew what he was laughing at. The figure I cut must have been enough to arouse the risibilities of an undertaker.

And all the time I was asking myself—not daring to ask Mildred, since for a good reason, probably, she had not volunteered the information—what had become of Robert?

The discomfort and indignity of my ridiculous position were really minor causes of my annoyance. I believed

that it meant a great deal to me in a business way, as well as socially, to make a good impression on Bromley, who, I had learned, was rather a stickler concerning not only the conventions but the niceties of life. He and his wife, who happened, this summer, to be abroad, moved in a set which, if not ultra-fashionable, was extremely well-to-do and excessively cultivated. Bromley's firm, moreover, were among the largest cloth buyers in the country, and since the first of the previous month I had been sales-agent for a new woolen mill in Baltimore that was struggling to get the cream of the cloth and worsted trade.

As we spun through the broad village street with its row of splendid maples on either side, turned off finally into a fine macadam road and went flying along between the well-kept hedges and imposing stone walls of millionaire estates, I was conscious, despite the misery of my cramped position, that Mildred was keeping up a lively and engaging conversation with our guest. That I was as completely ignored as though I had been Robert himself did not bother me. In fact I was rather pleased that it should be so, since I had no desire that Bromley should have his attention drawn to my inglorious, not to say ignominious, posture.

When at length our not unimpressive white colonial house at the top of the hill was reached, and I had managed with sharp twinges of pain to unbend my twisted and distorted limbs and to climb gingerly down from my uncomfortable roost, dragging Bromley's miserable suit-case with me, Mildred called me to her.

"Your hand, Stevie, dear," she said, and as I gave it to her and she sprang lightly from the phaeton, she whispered: "You'll have to unharness Judith. Robert is helplessly drunk."

If I had been a woman I think I should have sat down then and there and cried. To this day I wonder why Mildred did not do that—how she nerved herself to be gay and insouciant and witty and entertaining I could not understand.

I fairly flung up the steps of the piazza and thrust Bromley's suit-case inside the hall door.

"You'll have to excuse me a moment, old man," I said, taking the cue from my wife and putting on a brave and bold front, "while I go and hunt for"—I hesitated the shade of a second—"for one of the grooms," I added defiantly.

I depended on Mildred to get Bromley inside—I think tea was waiting, or something—but Bromley had a will of his own.

"Your view is magnificent," he said, planting himself on the edge of the piazza and gazing off over the valley to where, beyond a strip of woodland, the blue of Long Island Sound, dotted with white sails, was visible in the distance.

There was nothing for me to do but lead away the mare myself, and as I reached the stable I looked back and saw Bromley still standing there, with me and my unfamiliar task in full view.

I had driven horses more or less all my life, but I had never, in the thirty years of my terrestrial residence, either harnessed or unharnessed one, and I had not the faintest idea of how to go about it. I knew, of course, that straps must be unbuckled, but there seemed such a mystifying myriad of buckles that it was difficult to tell where to begin.

Just how I managed it I hardly know, but eventually I had the mare free of the buckboard, and bare of everything save her headstall and collar. To the collar the hames were still buckled and the traces were dangling under her forefeet. I had slipped the snap-hook of a hitching chain through her bit ring, and I saw at once that I could not remove her collar without unhitching her. I therefore released the hook and boldly attempted to lift her collar over her head. But her headstall, of course, was in the way.

Experience, I told myself, is a good teacher, and with a dexterity that surprised me I slipped off her bridle. Then once more I applied myself to the removal of collar and harness, from

which the traces still trailed. But her head was too big or the collar too small; I could see that at a glance. It would certainly be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for Judith's head to pass through that collar.

And she didn't like my efforts to force it off. Up went her head and a moment later up went her heels, and to my alarm as well as my dismay she scampered off over the lawn in the direction of the road, tripping and plunging over the dragging traces, while the collar slid up and down on her neck with terrifying, though rhythmical, insistence.

I was crimson with fright and mortification. The perspiration ran down my face in gushing rivulets.

"Robert!" I shouted, in a voice that should have awakened a mummified Rameses.

But the only response was from Bromley. He leaped over the piazza railing and ran, with waving arms, diagonally across the green velvet of our sloping terraces to head off the panic-stricken high-stepper. And head her off he did, sending her galloping back in the direction of the tennis court, where she raced blindly into the net, stumbled and fell, and lay kicking helplessly until Norah, the cook—who in some respects, I am bound to admit, is more of a man than I am—rushing wildly to the rescue, gathered the mare's forelock in one mighty fist, forced her head to the turf and held it there until Bromley and I arrived to extricate the animal's legs from the entangling mesh.

When at last Judith was on her feet again, with Norah still gripping her forelock, Bromley roared with laughter.

"Your effort at unharnessing, Lovegrove," he managed to say between his paroxysms, "was the funniest thing I ever saw. Fancy your trying to take off that collar with all its accouterments without turning it around. No wonder the poor mare rebelled!"

Norah volunteered to see Judith to her box-stall, and I offered no objection. At the moment I had but one absorbing passion, and that was for the bathtub.

Bromley was still laughing.

"What happened to the grooms?" he asked, and my discomfiture was complete.

"Grooms!" I ejaculated. "Whoever said anything about grooms? We haven't any grooms. We have one single, solitary useful man, and he's dead drunk and stone deaf somewhere out there in the barn."

And maybe I didn't hate and loathe and despise Bromley, whose laugh had flickered down now to a cynical smile.

We found Mildred on the piazza beside her tea-table. She had witnessed the adventure and I knew as soon as I saw her that it had distressed her almost as much as it had me; but Mildred is a wonderful woman and commands herself in a way that I envy.

"Judith is like a kitten," she volunteered glibly, "so playful!"

I frowned at her and she said no more. But Bromley would not let it rest.

"You've never been about horses much, I suppose, Lovegrove," he said, as he took a cane chair opposite Mildred and coolly wiped his hands on his handkerchief. "Never lived in the country till you came out here, eh?"

"No, Mr. Lovegrove is a city man," my wife hastened to answer before I could make reply, "but he loves horses. We thought of getting an automobile, but Stephen said: 'No, the horse is the thing; you are fond of driving and so am I,' and he has all the newest books on horses and stable management, and—well, we're both just devoted to Judith."

Bromley was still wearing that cynical smile, so I gritted my teeth.

"Theory is all very well," he observed as he took the cup that Mildred passed him, "but practice is better. You'd learn a lot, Lovegrove, if you'd just make up your mind to care for your mare yourself—groom her and all that sort of thing."

It seemed to me that he emphasized the word groom. Maybe not, but that is how it struck me at the moment.

"That's the Fennimore place over there," I remarked, determined to

change the subject, and I pointed to where, from a not far-distant knoll, the turrets of a great graystone mansion bit into the blue August sky.

"Really," returned Bromley. He was five or six years my senior, tall, spare, smooth-shaven, and with the sharp features of an ascetic; and he possessed a cold, calm cynicism of manner as well as speech that was very trying to me at all times, but especially this afternoon.

"You know Fennimore," I went on, "Fennimore of Easby & Fennimore."

"Oh, yes," he answered, "I know who he is; the firm is rated. Al, I believe, but I have never met him. He's—well, they tell me he is rather—what shall I say? He has made all his money in the past six or seven years, and he shows it."

Personally, I liked Fennimore. I had never been able to do any business with his house—he was in the same line as Bromley—but I had met him coming and going on the train, and had played whist with him, and—I liked him.

"He's the big gun up here," I added, anxious to rub it in.

"Mrs. Fennimore is a sweet little woman," Mildred interjected. "She invited me there to a bridge whist a few weeks ago and I found her charming."

Bromley smiled.

"Somebody told me she had once been on the stage," he remarked.

I coughed and glanced at Mildred. I wondered whether he knew that my wife's father had been an actor—and not a famous one either. Neither of us made any comment.

I was glad when it came time to dress for dinner, and I think Mildred was a bit relieved, too. We dined late and the intervening two hours between tea and dressing time had been somewhat trying for both of us. We had intended having Mildred's niece with us. She is a very brilliant girl and she would have been a valuable adjunct to our forces of entertainment, but at the last minute she had an attack of tonsillitis—overworked brilliancy, Mrs. Lovegrove called it—and disappointed us.

When we came down to dinner the gas was lighted and the candles on the table were glowing beneath their pink shades. There had been a sudden change in the weather. The sky was black with threatening rain clouds, and at intervals we were dazzled by sharp flashes of distant lightning and deafened by long, reverberant peals of thunder.

Norah was an excellent cook and I felt sure that no matter how far astray we had gone in other ways we were certain to give Bromley a dinner that he would remember. I am not a rich man, and—withstanding my break about the grooms—I dislike pretense, so I had decided that it would be folly to serve more than one kind of wine at the table. A preliminary cocktail? Yes. And then only champagne. Usually we do not drink champagne. We do not feel that we can afford it; but on this occasion I had bought a single quart and I now wished to make sure that it was being properly cooled.

So while Bromley was looking over some foreign photographs on the drawing-room table I said quietly in an aside to Mildred:

"The wine is in the cooler, I suppose?"

She started as if she had been struck.

"I never thought of it," she whispered. "Excuse me for just one minute and I'll see to it."

When she reëntered the room I saw instantly from her expression that we had encountered more trouble.

"The bottle is laying empty out in the woodshed. Robert's condition is accounted for," she murmured.

I swore under my breath, and then and there Robert's dismissal without a reference was decided upon.

"We have some claret?" I suggested.

"Not a bottle. We used the last on Sunday," announced my wife.

"Send Katie over to Fennimore's," I proposed, "and borrow a bottle of something. Keep the dinner back fifteen minutes. We can't give Bromley well water."

Mildred moved toward the door again. At that moment a flash of

lightning blazed in through the open windows, the thunder crashed as though the skies had fallen, and the rain came down in a flood.

She returned to me with upraised hands.

"Katie can't go in this storm," she whispered; and I knew that she was right.

She wanted to apologize to Bromley, but I would not permit it. He must take us as he found us. To tell the truth I had it in for him ever since that affair of the mare, and—"Well," I said to myself, "if he can't enjoy his dinner without wine, it serves him right."

I mixed the cocktails myself, and, though I say it, I do know more about mixing cocktails than unharassing horses. Bromley smacked his lips over the one I handed him.

And the dinner was perfect. Norah had simply outdone herself. I began to feel that in spite of the absence of wine—in spite of everything, in fact—Bromley was gradually thawing out, and that he would go away from us with a real kindly feeling in his heart for me and mine. Indeed, I began to count on a big order from Bromley before the week was out, and I could already see Mildred and myself sitting in the Bromley box at the Metropolitan next winter.

And just then I noticed Mildred glancing apprehensively upward. I followed her glance. The gas was flickering—sinking and rising, and then sinking again.

"It's going out," she said.

Bromley looked up, too.

"Acetylene?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered nervously. "Do you know anything about it?"

"A little," was his reply. "I have acetylene lamps on my motor, you know."

And as he spoke the room, save for the faint light of the sputtering, guttering candles and the intermittent glare of the lightning, was in darkness.

"The bibulous Robert!" I muttered.

I had, myself, a faint idea of how the gas was made. I knew there was

a stone gas-house about fifty yards from the kitchen door, and that therein was a machine into which was poured water mixed with lumps of a mineral-like substance called carbide, and that gas resulted from the admixture. As to how much water and how much carbide, however, I had not the slightest notion.

"You'll have to go out and make the gas yourself, Stevie," decided Mildred. "We can't be left in the dark and we haven't a lamp in the house."

Almost hopelessly I asked:

"Doesn't Norah know how to make it?"

And as I looked across the table at Bromley I saw him smiling in the dim light of the candles. That was the finishing stroke. I felt murder in my heart for Bromley.

"Katie," said Mrs. Lovegrove, addressing the waitress, "ask Norah if she knows how to make gas."

"If she knows how to make gas as well as she knows how to handle a recalcitrant mare, and make a *vol-au-vent de ris de veau*, she is a treasure indeed," Bromley observed, and my rancor rose still higher.

Katie returned from the kitchen with Norah's answer.

"She don't know, but she says that you mustn't take a light in the gas-house. If you do it will blow up."

"You need an electric torch," suggested Bromley. "Do you happen to have one?"

"No," I growled, "we haven't. But there's a window in the gas-house and a lantern held outside will do all right."

And I rose from the table. I didn't care if I never got an order from Bromley. If we wished to go to the Opera we would buy our own seats in the parquet. Bromley had gone a step too far with me and he must take the consequences.

"Come on, old man," I cried maliciously; "I'll lend you an old mackintosh and cap and umbrella, and you shall hold the lantern while I make the gas."

Whatever is said of Bromley, no one can say that he is not game. He put

on the old things I gave him and took the umbrella and lantern and went out with me into the storm as though he really enjoyed the novelty of it. But my very soul was bitter against him, then, and I reveled in the revenge of stationing him there in the wet grass, outside the little window, while the rain came drenchingly down, the lightning cut slashes in the black night and the thunder roared and rattled and rumbled so you could hardly hear yourself think.

By the light of Bromley's lantern I, snug inside the little gas-house, read the printed directions on the side of the machine, and carefully examined each part of the mechanism as there indicated. One of the first things I discovered was that the slacked carbide must be let out at the bottom and the tank flushed before attempting to make any new gas. About a bucketful of slack and water, the directions said, was sufficient to let out in this way each day. So I stooped down and carefully turned the escape crank. Out came the whitish gray, slimy ooze with a gush, the water, like so much white-wash, splashing after. In a second fully two bucketfuls had escaped and my hands, coat-sleeves, shoes and trousers-ends were drenched and spattered with the ill-smelling mess.

I tried to shut off the valve but the crank refused to hold, and the stuff continued to flow in a torrent, only a small proportion finding its way through the waste pipe into the pit beneath, the greater part flooding the floor of the house and doing further damage to my best evening dress trousers. As for my patent-leather shoes, they were ruined beyond repair.

When the tank was quite empty the valve worked like a charm.

The directions said that to make gas the tank must first be filled with water. I calculated that to fill it about thirty buckets of water would be required, and the nearest place of supply was the kitchen, fifty yards away.

I stepped outside and told Bromley what we were up against.

"Give me a couple of pails," was all

he said, as he put his lantern on the ground and lowered his umbrella.

We managed to secure four pails and then the tramp back and forth carrying water to that thirsty gas machine began, the rain soaking down all the while and the thunder playing a regular Walküre overture overhead. I never saw anything drink the way that tank did. If we gave it one pailful we gave it fifty, and then the water barely showed at the white mark which indicated the filling was accomplished.

"Now, old chap," I said, as the rain dripped on my chin from the brim of the old felt hat I wore, "hold the lantern again and I'll let the carbide drop down, and we'll have gas in a jiff."

Bromley took up his position at the window as before, still without a murmur—oh, he was game, all right!—and I filled the hopper at the top with carbide and screwed down the lid. Then I turned the wheel at the side, and there came to my ear a bubbling, throbbing sound as the gas generated and flowed into the receiver, which began to go jolting upward. But it went too slowly to suit my impatience. I was hot and wet and dirty and tired and ill-tempered, and not inclined to waste any more time than was necessary. I turned the wheel again, not once but several times, and heard the lumps drop in a shower and the tank suddenly become a caldron.

The receiver fairly jumped to the top of its frame guard, which held it fast, and the water, rushing and boiling, rose in the funnel through which we had filled the tank until it overflowed in a cataract; rose, too, around the receiver and poured over in a flood. I confess I was alarmed. Momentarily I expected the whole machine to fly apart. I yelled and ran toward the door.

But before I could reach it Bromley, startled by my yell and rushing to the rescue, stood on the threshold, lantern in hand, about to step inside. The immeasurable danger from that lantern in that little room, overflowing as I believed with gas, filled me with a panic of terror.

"My God!" I cried, "take it away!"

And before Bromley could hear, much less comprehend, I had thrown my whole weight upon him and sent him and his lantern rolling over together in the soft mud and slacked carbide that lay without the door.

The next moment I was helping him to his feet and pelting him with apologies, but at last his grit and self-control had given way. He was angry, and his language was something awful to listen to. I really never would have believed Bromley knew such oaths.

What happened at the house afterward I remember only in a confused way. I recollect that the gas was burning beautifully and that I spent some time in looking over a time table to find which was the next train our guest could take back to town; and I recall, too, that by some sort of miracle Robert was himself again and had the closed carriage at the door a half-hour before train time—for which deed I revoked his earlier sentence of banishment. But whether Bromley bade me good night, whether he shook my hand or

whether he swore at me again I cannot for the life of me remember.

Mildred told me the next morning that we both begged him to come again, but I doubt whether I did.

I know I never heard a man laugh more heartily than did Fennimore on the train that morning when I related to him the gas-making episode and pictured Bromley rolling in the wet.

"And I was looking for an order from him today," I added, "for five thousand yards at least. I guess that's up a tree for keeps."

"Don't you care," laughed Fennimore; "don't you care. We want some of those goods of yours. I was looking over your samples yesterday. I'll give you an order that will make Bromley's five thousand yards look sick. Gad! I'd have given a thousand dollars to see him carrying water in that storm; and to have seen him wallowing—yes, that's it, wallowing—in the mud I'd have doubled the reward. Lovegrove, you and your wife must dine with us to-morrow night. I want you to tell that story to Mrs. Fennimore."

FATHER CHRISTMAS

By CLINTON SCOLLARD

THE rosemary and bay
We round thine altars lay,
O Father, Father Christmas,
And druid ivy green as is the May!

Aye, and we do not spare
To twine the laurel there,
O Father, Father Christmas,
Breathing the while an ardent votive prayer!

Thou art the soul of Mirth,
Patron of Home and Hearth,
O Father, Father Christmas,
Lord of the day that gave the Christ Child birth!

To Him we bring, through thee,
In all humility,
O Father, Father Christmas,
Our loving gifts till Time shall cease to be!

THE LOVE OF CARMINELLE

By MARY MCNEIL FENOLLOSA

"IT is a day for love," sighed Carminelle, stretching slim arms up to the sky.

Her companion, sitting on the marble bench, near which the girl's bright hammock swung, unknotted the little frown which had begun to gather between his fair Saxon brows, threw his head back and answered, in her own gay, laughing vein: "The first, bold, swaggering, dandy day of summer, and he wears you in his buttonhole."

At this the girl laughed aloud like a child, striking her bare hands together in delight. "Bravo! Such pretty speeches in so short a time. Such pretty speeches from a—gringo!" The obnoxious term "gringo" became, by the way she spoke it, a slow caress.

"I couldn't have said it this time last week," he admitted. "But you are teaching me new ways, Carminelle."

"Not Carminelle—not Carminelle—but love itself is here to teach," said the girl, and crossed herself as though the name of love were sacred. Then she too frowned, and stirred restlessly, so that the silken hammock moved in great ripples like a crimson snake. "I hate things that have passed. There is no last week. There never was. There is only—now."

"Now is good enough for me," assented the other with a laugh. He leaned closer and would have caught in one of his the nervous hands, but Carminelle drew back. She was a creature of swift changes. Petulance—laughter—remorse—anger—passion—hurried in flecks of sun and shadow over the tropic landscape of her heart. It seemed a storm-cloud, risen from nowhere, that now threatened them.

She leaned forward, her posture eloquent of repressed excitement. "Suppose, ah, *Madre de Dios!*—only just suppose that I had failed to make you care for me!" He was startled at the note of tragedy in her voice.

"Did you know that you wanted me to care from the first instant of our meeting?" he questioned.

"Of course. How stupid to need to ask! Such things must be of the first instant, or they are not real. It was even before we met—at Angele's dance, you know. I saw you standing at the conservatory door with—her—the *vieille gribouille!* Her round baby eyes were rolled up and gummed to your face—like blue wafers! Such an expression, sirup and sachet in a paste!—Ouf! I should have thought to see you shudder. But no—you smiled—you were pleased. Such are the men we love!" She gave a disdainful shrug, and leaned back in her hammock.

"How good of you to show me one better," said the young man lightly.

She swung herself erect in an instant and gazed squarely into his merry eyes. His amusement irritated her. It was no laughing matter, that first moment.

"You don't believe in the immediate recognition, then, of a love that was meant to be," she demanded of him hotly. "You don't believe, as we Creoles of New Orleans believe, that from each man's rib is made, for him, the predestined woman?"

"Oh, I am no scoffer," he replied, still smiling. "At Angele's ball I felt your eyes between my shoulder blades and when I turned and there was—you, I knew my time had come."

"What was it like with you?" cooed Carminelle.

"A sort of physical shock, a blinding daze—a shiver—and then the fever that can't be cooled!" His last words, lowered to passionate vibration, should have satisfied his listener. Still she turned restlessly.

"You must not wish it cooled," she cried to him. "That is the martyrdom of love, that fevered agony—we pass through it to find the voiceless joy!"

The gray eyes of the lover watched her. Now, at the exaggeration of her words, a look that hinted of wonder mingled with the ardor of their gaze. She, sensitive to a film of unresponse, grew suddenly chilled. Her face began to pale. The slim fingers writhed nervously in and out. When she spoke it was as if to a fear, and not to him. "Something has come between us, a something which, yesterday, was not here. I cannot discern it, even with my eyes shut tight, like this, and my soul spread like a fisher's net. But it has come. Oh, I might have known I was too happy! Last night I dreamed of a broken moon, and that is ill for love, Mom Zebre says."

"You'll get over all those silly superstitions," said her companion with a voice and gesture meant to reassure. Still the frown twitched again between his brows. He put his hand up, half unconsciously, to an inner pocket, and then at her sharp look of inquiry, let it fall. Neither found the forthcoming word, and an intangible embarrassment enveloped them, so that they turned, each from the other, and stared out into troubled silence.

About them the old Spanish courtyard raised moldering pink walls, inclosing a cube of golden afternoon. Among the dead, forgotten vines of last year's growth there was a scramble of new vines, all racing upward in unison toward an alluring sky-line of gentian-blue. The straggling limbs of fig trees bore, on the tip of each, a signal flame of green. The dark oleander and pomegranate trees had decked themselves in myriad dots of carmine and of rose which, in a few days more, would be ac-

complished flowers. Exactly in the centre of the space stood a fountain, a small, naked boy of iron, with raised umbrella. The thin trickle of water down the umbrella ribs made a tinkling harmony, as of bells.

The girl's eyes were fastened upon this musical fringe, but the young man stared downward upon the flagstones at his feet. He was thinking of his mother's letter, received that morning from his home in the North. He had not expected her to be altogether pleased, but she might have left out that sting in the tail of it. Again, as if impelled, he put his hand up to the pocket where it lay. A faint, resentful crackle of vellum answered him. It was a sound so delicate that he had felt rather than heard it; yet Carminelle flared instantly into alertness as if at a challenge. "The letter, of course!" she cried, as if she had solved the problem. "It is the day when her answer should have come." At his expression she caught her lip between her teeth and murmured, "Ah, then, *that* is the thing that has been lying, coiled, between us!"

The young man was silent. He could not meet her eyes.

"Will you say nothing?" she cried out. "What has she said? Does she, —a Yankee—dare—*Mon Dieu!* will you sit there like a stone while my heart tears me into pieces?"

"Here, not so fast," he said desperately. "I haven't admitted the possession of a letter." It was a weak device to gain time, and he knew it; but the girl's fierce eagerness had startled and discomforted him. This was not the way Northern girls behaved—but then they were not Carminelle. There was but one Carminelle, and she loved him. How beautiful she was in this vibrant, jungle poise! "Tiger, tiger, burning bright," his heart sang, even while his more deliberate brain groped for an outlet to the situation.

"Give me the letter. I will read for myself," she commanded, springing to her feet and holding out an imperious hand.

"Dearest, you would not wish me to

do a thing like that!—you, with generations of Southern chivalry behind you. The letter is written to me alone.”

He saw that he had gained a point. Carminelle's great, angry eyes for an instant hid themselves. When she spoke she was more composed, though her words were bitter. “I must infer, then, that your mother does not congratulate you. Mother of God!” she cried, breaking bounds again. “And her Roundhead ancestors probably scoured kettles on the back steps of my people!”

“We have our own pride of ancestry in New England,” said the young man, more coldly. “There is no need for comparison. At least I can promise that my mother will never forget what is due herself and me. As my wife, Carminelle, you will find a courteous welcome.”

“A dry bone to fling to a *De la Croix*,” said the girl, with scorn. “Probably the Yankee *maman* has said to you, ‘If too late to draw back we will, of course, make the best of it.’”

She turned sharply and watched his face. Then she threw back her head with a mirthless laugh, for she saw that her arrow had found its mark.

Her companion felt the hot blood race upward to his cheek. In that instant Carminelle seemed a creature to be feared. Her intuitions were uncanny. The exact words of his mother's letter seemed to creep out from his pocket and spell themselves upon the still air: “If you have committed yourself to this engagement, your family will make the best of it, of course. For the present I shall admit nothing to our friends. Latin blood is treacherous. Perhaps you will in time come to desire your own release.”

“You will be kindly received as my wife,” he repeated, a little tamely. “After all, darling, if we love each other everything will come right. You will be faithful to me, as I to you. Is it not so?” He would have drawn her to him, but she fell back.

“So she hinted that, too. She lets you feel I may not be faithful—that I am of the blood to betray.” She was panting now a little. Her hand slid to

her belt and began to fumble nervously with an ornament she wore. It was of dull silver, the shape of a hilt, and from it depended in clusters various “bangles” and curiosities, such as girls affect, a tiny powder box and mirror, a *vinai-grette*, a small rabbit's foot mounted in a silver cuff, and a miniature St. Joseph hanging ignominiously by his heels.

“I will not ask to read your mother's letter,” she said in a hurried voice, as though she had been running. “I would not soil my sight with it, but I will take it in my hand that I may tear it to tiniest bits. Here, let me lean by the fountain and feed the goldfish. It may tarnish their bright sides, but what do we care for that? Let love be master here, as you have said. Only love, and you and I. Ah, my tall, blond lover from the North, we will tear the dark words to pieces and forget!”

The temptation came like a physical longing to obey, to give up the letter and end the tempestuous scene.

Carminelle came closer, so that she swayed against him in the sunlight. She put her hand upon his arm and looked up with a slow, bewildering smile. It was as if she and he were all alone in Paradise, and she a great tropic flower that had bloomed for his delight. What were his mother, his home, his boyhood's memories, but vague outlines in the haze of this enchantment? He felt her other hand creep upward to his pocket. In an instant more she would have seized the letter. He struck her hand down and before she could spring back had caught and crushed her against his breast. A rush of angry words came to her lips, but he stopped them with his own lips. Under his kisses she began to tremble. He heard her give a little moan of ecstasy and then she sagged in his arms.

“Love is enough. You see it is!” he whispered.

“Our souls were put in us only to know this hour,” she answered breathlessly. “Again—kiss me again, my lover—”

“And when my mother knows you,” he cried triumphantly, at last, “when

she has only seen you for an instant, she too will realize that it was destiny that found us for each other."

A shudder passed through Carminelle. "The letter," she said. "You have not given it yet."

"Don't think of that again, my darling," he implored. "Come, let us sit together in your crimson hammock. I have so many plans to talk about. You know I can't wait more than a month to marry you—"

"You will neither read me the letter nor destroy it. You think more of a few cold, written words than of my happiness," she said, in a stubborn way.

The young man sighed. So the storm was not deflected after all.

"Can't you ignore it, darling? Wait until I've written her again and had an answer. Wait till she sees your picture."

"Those things mean nothing. Now is the test. You must choose between her and me."

"Nonsense! I'll do nothing of the sort. She is my mother and I both love and respect her. You are my love, my one love, and I adore you—I am mad over you. Isn't that enough, even for a witch?"

"No," said Carminelle, her face hardening. "Words were never enough for a woman. I'd give the whole world up if you should ask it. I'd kill—burn—plot—starve—die—only because you wished it. I want as much from you."

"It's safer for a woman to make those wild assertions than a man—but, as it happens, I can take you up. Because I love you and am asking it, renounce all thoughts of this unfortunate letter."

"Ah, you would snare me in my own words," said the girl. "You are clever—but remember that I spoke them because of something that had come before. I'll do anything—anything but this one thing."

"As I supposed," said the young man quietly.

"I tell you it is a choice this moment," stormed Carminelle. "A choice between me, whom you say you love, and a letter. Between a miserable, inanimate, written thing, and me!"

"Put it more fairly, Carminelle: an

act of caddish disrespect to a good mother, and the passing whim of an angry girl."

"You are trying to turn me off, but I'll not be turned," said she in the same dogged, sullen way. "Love runs like fire in the veins of a De la Croix, but mingled with its course is found a fiercer fluid, the thing called jealousy. It takes us like a tropic storm—it has brought ruin and death to more than one of us—it is a thing we fear."

"Dear love, you are simply making yourself ill over nothing. Now try to control yourself. I love you as deeply as any man has ever loved. Don't wreck our happiness at the beginning. I'll go now, darling, until your anger passes. I'll go before you say more things that we'll regret."

He turned to walk across the courtyard. The great entrance to the covered driveway, the one direct exit to the street, seemed to invite and beckon him. If he could only get away before she forced new issues—and what an untrammelled child she was! What a thing of flame!

"Stop!" she cried hoarsely. "Don't leave me like this. I can't endure it. You are throwing me over for another woman."

"Absurd and false!" he broke in. "I tell you—"

But she checked him. "If you leave me so, I shall go mad. I don't know what I may do. Oh, my dear love, just yield to me for love's sake! No matter if I am unreasonable or already mad. You love me as I am. Then yield because it is Carminelle who begs it."

He put her arms down gently. "Dearest, don't hold me back. You'll see things differently a little later on. Tonight I shall come again and we shall talk it over."

"Tonight! There will be no to-night," she said. Her face was ashen now—at every word her lips quivered. Suddenly she turned to him like a prisoner who has his last plea to make. "For your own sake—because I love you—give me my way. You do not understand. You cannot reason with

an elemental passion. Your calmness is but a signal to a crouching tragedy. You may learn to control me after I have become your wife—Undine found her soul through marriage—but I am not yet your wife. The snarling ghosts of ancestors are at my heels. Give in to me—give in!”

“Now you are really hysterical, poor little girl,” said the man, greatly troubled. “Had I better not call for some servant, the old nurse, Mom Zebre?”

She gave a gesture of impatience. “Once more,” she said, “I ask you, will you keep the letter and let me go?”

He sighed heavily and did not answer.

“So be it then,” she said. She threw her arms to their full span and her face back to the sky. “So be it,” she repeated. Her voice was low and clear, and something in it turned his blood to water.

Yet obstinacy was in him, too. He realized that it was now will pitted against will. A woman of this passionate strain would despise a lover that she could subdue. Yet her subtle metamorphoses constrained and fascinated him apart from their own purpose. It was as if some fantasy of magic were taking place under his very eyes. Now as he stared upon her she began to lower her chin slowly until her face and then her eyes looked squarely into his. Again it was a different woman. If the sun had placed upon her a mask, completely hiding the Carminelle he knew, the change could not have been more startling. He wanted to pinch himself to find whether or not he was asleep and dreaming. Perhaps, after all, he was still in Boston and this was a reverie of an old Spanish courtyard with pink walls, and a strange girl, half child; half Liliith, who loved him with a primeval fury that was menace, who drew, compelled and wrought upon him, turning the outer world to ashes.

“Well, then,” drawled the slow, sweet voice of this strange woman, “if you are really to go, adieu! There is barely time for my afternoon siesta.”

Softly she nodded. Her smile was frank as a boy's. Turning, she began to sink down to her crimson hammock, twisting and shrugging her lithe figure into lines of greatest ease. One bronze-clad foot went out to the flagstones, and she began to rock a little, to and fro, her upturned eyes still smiling into his.

She abandoned herself more fully to the long curve of the hammock, and lifted her two long arms for a most unconventional stretch. The movement had all of the strength and grace and sleek unconsciousness of the jungle animal to which again he likened her. “Tiger, tiger, burning bright!” Now she yawned, throwing her head far back. He could see the pink coral lining of her mouth.

Tortured and repelled, he turned away. His fist clenched unconsciously. He could have boxed her ears as one does a naughty child. He faced about quickly and crossed the courtyard. She watched him sidewise, under long lashes, noting the long stride, the splendid poise of figure, the perfect fit of the rough gray coat across athletic shoulders. Her hand went feverishly to the dull silver ornament at her belt.

Now he had reached the alley. This was long, even in a district of covered architecture. The sides curved over above him like the tube of a giant telescope. The distant street-end flattened against the sunlight in a silver disc. His angry footsteps roused, it seemed to him, a myriad slumbering ghost-steps of other outraged lovers. They scurried along with him like rats, so that he felt pursued as well as mocked.

Now came the sound of a new approach, a stealthy race, slurring its warning down through the patter of the ghosts. He swerved instantly, then wheeled in a semi-circle, uttering a low cry of fear. The dagger of Carminelle struck full against the wall. Two hissing crimson sparks danced in the gloom and vanished. The ornaments at the hilt of the dagger made a fool's jangle in the silence. The man caught her wrist and stared full into blazing eyes. He saw no hint of shame in them.

"For God's sake," he panted, "do you want to—hang?"

"No fear of that," she said defiantly. "Had your good angel not made you turn just then, this dagger would have gone straight from your hot blood to mine. In my heart," she added, with the gesture of a queen, "it would have found its last romance."

"You would have killed me and yourself for such a trifle?" he muttered. Now that the danger was over, a sudden dizziness threw him against the oozing stones.

The black look came to her face again. "It is the curse of race—the curse of jealousy. I warned you. I felt that you were bringing death to both. I cannot live without you, now I have found you. I will not try to live!" she cried fiercely, and had almost wrenched herself and the dagger free.

"Give me that fool thing," said the man.

She put it into his outstretched hand without a word. He threw it down to the stones and set his heel upon it.

The hilt snapped and the ornaments were scattered upon the pavement.

She leaned over, peering curiously. "The blade is still perfect," she whispered. With the toe of one boot he moved it to a place where it made a little bridge between two of the rounding stones. Another grim application of his heel and it snapped with the sharp and vibrant detonation of a tuning-fork.

Looking at her with the new mastery in his eyes, he said, "Go get your hat. I don't think either of us is safe until you're married to me."

Carminelle gazed out into the sunshine at though she had noticed it for the first time. Her face was that of an ecstatic child. "What need of a hat?" she laughed. "I'll wear the wide blue heaven for my hat, and white clouds for my ostrich plumes. Come!"

So hand in hand they ran down the whispering arch, and one of them, at least, was thinking of Undine, who gained a soul through love.

YOU

By ELSA BARKER

I WEAR the stars like lilies in my hair,
 I feel the breeze like God's breath on my face
 Whispering an unknown word—and everywhere
 I see the vision of a love-lit face.

So strange it seems! A little while ago
 I knew not any of these lovely things;
 To all my dreams the demons answered no,
 Darkening the daylight with their evil wings.

Tell me, Beloved, who are learned and wise,
 How do you hold all beauty in your hand,
 And all the host of heaven in your eyes,
 And in your hours the moons of fairyland?

You pass my threshold, and the narrow room
 Is peopled with a million forms of air,
 The barren boughs of faith are all abloom,
 And I am mute with wonder and with prayer.

AN UNDIVIDED HEART

By MADELINE BRIDGES

THE woman who had never married sat listening to the man she had loved—not only with passion but with all the motherhood of a heart that had never known wifehood. He seldom spared her the recitals of these sad histories that come from the life men live, in their every-day world. This was the saddest of all, yet she listened with a tranquillity that gave him courage to unmask his soul.

"When I went to tell her that the change must come," he was saying breathlessly, "she was—oh, I had expected a scene, but she was gentleness itself—not even astonished! I made her understand that I would take care of her comfort—she had always earned her own living—that was the understanding when we went together; I might take her out, and give her presents, but she preferred to be independent—"

"And you loved her more for that?"

"For everything! So when I broke it to her as gently as I could that I was to be married—that I must be—she was perfectly sweet and kind about it. And then, for the first time, I heard of—the other man! She had been saying no to him for three years. He was employed in the place where she worked, they met every day, and he wanted to marry her—not dreaming that there was anything in her life—she could not tell him why he must not think of her as a wife! She could only say no. And she was ready to cling to me until the end. But I showed her the wedding cards—"

"Poor girl!"

"Yes! . . . Oh, Hester . . . I don't know! For now your pity is due my way—now, be sorry for *me*! . . . She was so quiet—so strong—so help-

ful! She put aside the explanations—everything was made easy for me. She had no *rights*, she said, no claims to consideration beyond what I chose to give her. We talked for hours in her little room—the little room where we had been so madly happy—it was always the same overwhelming delight for us to meet. The thought carried us through the days that kept us apart. I was faithful to my mate. She was mine, and she made me hers. Wasn't it strange, but—you have heard the story of our first meeting?"

"No," she answered, "only of your last meeting—"

"Well, she was walking before me in the street, one evening, just at twilight. I had noticed her beautiful figure, and her dark hair, but I had not thought to try to see her face. She stopped suddenly to buy a paper from a little ragged child, and then—I followed her! I followed her with a purpose stronger than any other bent my will had ever taken! It swept over me like a torrent—swept me with it! . . . We rode uptown in the same car. I stood before her, holding a strap and waiting for her glance. The first look was one of indifference that changed to something like interest before it left my face. The next glance was frankly one of interest, but modest and womanly. The third time our eyes met she flushed—her cheek burned and she turned her face to the window. I felt she was a trifle—not annoyed—but frightened. When she left the car I stepped off behind her and kept at her side until we were halfway down the block. It was a quiet street—then I said:

"May I speak to you one little word? Don't be afraid of me—I will leave you the moment you tell me to go!"

"She made no answer and we walked a few paces. I tried again.

"I know I take the risk of being misunderstood but, if I alarm you—

"No, I am not afraid," she said in a full, sweet voice; "but it is strange that you have taken the liberty of following me."

"Will you let me walk beside you for a little way?"

"If you wish it!" I could see a smile coming. "I don't think you are a person to be afraid of," Hester! . . . But I *was* a person to be afraid of! She did not know it—but I knew! . . . I left her at her door with the promise of meeting the next night!

"And we met—we met! . . . And for many a next night! But lovers' love was not permitted at once. I touched her arm as we walked. I held her hand at parting . . . but, at last—we had been listening to music together, and it was late when we said good night. I held her in my arms in the shadow of her doorway—we kissed—and in all my life before nothing had ever brought me such rapture as that moment. The next week I found her a quiet place on the West Side. The windows looked out on the river. Sunset and moonlight and darkness and dawn—we saw them together. No one asked us questions. Our little world was there . . . we went and came . . . Oh, Hester!—*that* was happiness . . . Then, as you know, Fate suddenly drew in the loose ends of my life—the free ends—and made chains of them—No—listen! I do not say I am indifferent to Marianna. She is dear to me—but a man's heart is a house of many mansions! If you had been a man—you would know! . . . Oh, I am cruel to you, dear!—I ought not—" He stopped with a long sigh.

"Go on, go on," she encouraged him.

"Well—but now—now I am coming to the tragedy! Now pity the poor prisoner in his shackles! . . . Just a month ago I was married. I had not seen—Ellen—since the parting . . . I said 'God bless you' when we parted. . . . Hester—think of that! I stabbed her, and said 'God bless you'

to heal the wound . . . I had taught her to sin, and then I asked God to bless her! Well—I am afraid my wish has come to pass—I prayed better than I knew! Last night we went to the theater. Marianna took the whim all at once—still we found seats that pleased her; the act had begun. It was a pleasant play—a pretty story of—of love, and faithfulness—our hands were clasped under the program—I felt contented . . . I wonder if ever again I shall feel that sense of calm contentment?—reconciliation to the inevitable—the long years of settled married life with Marianna? But the curtain came down and the lights flashed up, and there—there was Ellen's head before me—Ellen's head!—the dark braids that I loved to untwist—she was just below us—I could have touched her by stretching out an arm. And the man—the lover—perhaps her husband now—was beside her—sitting close. It seemed for a moment as if someone had struck me a blow and—blinded me . . . And then the impulse came to clutch her away from his side—a desperate feeling that she was mine, that I must call out and claim her. I had started halfway from my seat, I think, or perhaps I was trembling, for I felt Marianna's hand pressing mine. I heard her asking—

"Lawrence, what is it? Are you ill?"

"I shook my head, trying to smile. 'It's nothing,' I said; 'nothing you could understand.'"

"But something has happened to disturb you—you are so pale; why do you say I could not understand?"

"Would you understand if I said I had caught sight of someone—of a man—I—would like to *kill*?"

"I was smiling, and she returned my smile with a look of relief.

"You frightened me! No, indeed, I would neither understand—nor *believe*! You don't want to kill any man. Who is he? An enemy of yours?"

"No—I am his enemy." No more was said and she seemed to forget the incident, but before the play ended I asked her to come home. I could not

look at the stage, and I could not look at Ellen. What I suffered was like physical agony—and the fear that later I might meet her face to face made me mad! . . . She wore a little blue embroidered waist that I had given her, and the pearl combs in her dark hair I had bought for her birthday. I have not slept since, Hester; the misery keeps gnawing at my heart—the longing—oh, the longing to be with her—to hold her in my arms—to tell her she must take me to her heart again—to tell her that I can't live—I can't *live*, and know she belongs to another man . . . Hester, if this that I feel is sin . . . the preachers call it so—it is its own punishment! If I could put it away from me! But the temptation to fling everything behind me, break all barriers—and go to the one woman—the one woman—the only one! Hester, what shall I do? You are kind to care so much! Your dear tears! I am not worthy of them."

He stooped and kissed the listener's pale cheek. After a moment she spoke to him:

"Lawrence, men must be soldiers. On the battlefield they bear the pain of wounds, and meet death bravely—you will be brave. Try to realize that what you are bearing now, Ellen bore for you, when you chose to wring her heart and cast her off. Now repay her! A better happiness can come to her than she could ever find with you—because honor, now, may come with love. A woman's place in the world, the wife's—the mother's place! In God's name, then, let her have this chance! You prayed that God might bless her. Let Him bless her, dear! Stand out of the way."

"Oh . . . Hester!—"

"Yes, I know, I know! No hurt has been so bitter as this. But this is the test of character, for all your life—you will rise to the height—you dare not fall below it, Lawrence! Ellen was good to you—be good to her."

A long moment of silence, while her eyes held his eyes—with a pleading deeper than words. Then he stood up before her, tall and straight.

"I promise, Hester! Before God, I promise."

The next day, near sunset, Lawrence's Marianna came to sit awhile with Hester. Lawrence would call presently to bring her home to dinner. The two women had not often spoken together, but now Marianna was pouring forth her heart's story to her husband's friend. She held Hester's hand in both her own.

"Sometimes I am afraid I am too happy. I tremble, thinking it cannot last, this peace, this perfect rest and confidence. And when I look at the marriages around me, the heartaches, the tragedies—the martyrdom that wives are bearing, and still smiling at the world, then I think—oh, what must it be, to feel that the one you love is growing cold, or weary, or turning to some other attraction? Such things happen. But, I am sure in my deepest heart, I am sure that I shall never need to feel this fear! I am *all* to Lawrence, and he is a man, as you know, who never cared for women, as men care—that is what first attracted me, I think, the fact that he was indifferent!"

"I often wondered just how your marriage came about—Lawrence never told me."

"Oh, I scarcely know. From the first I liked him and hoped for it. I am frank with you, you see! And then we were thrown together a great deal. He seemed so absorbed, always so full of some feeling or thought; it was a long, long time before we became well acquainted, even when I stayed for weeks in his home. But, somehow, I always felt he *would* come to me at last. I know it could not be otherwise—as long as his heart was free!

"Both our families wished it—and—and—so—it happened—just naturally, I think—and because we were meant for each other."

"You have no doubt of that?"

"Oh, no doubt! You see, I have known him so well, all the interests of his life—and while women were attracted by him, I know he cared nothing

. . . so he cares all the more for me!
Isn't that natural? It gives me great
happiness to feel that he brings me an
undivided heart!"

"Always believe it, dear," said Hes-

ter gently; "always keep that faith."

"Oh, Hester, I could never lose it.
Lawrence is Lawrence!"

"Yes, Marianna, Lawrence is Lawrence!"

THE BATHER

By JAMES NEWTON MATTHEWS

NO light can limn—no art can trace
The haunting beauty of her face
As, standing where the morning spills
Its splendor on the purpling hills,
She leans against the terrace-stone
Beside a garden overblown
With flowers most marvelously fair
Amidst the fountains flashing there—
A scene which, robbed of her, would seem
A sweet, but most imperfect dream.

Released from the embracing pool,
Her round, white body, chaste and cool,
Half-hidden by the burnished gold
Of falling tresses, fold on fold,
Leans like a marble Naiad drawn
To lure the ardent eyes of Dawn—
Or like a dream of symmetry
Which but the pure in heart may see,
And see but once, and then confess
That heaven holds less loveliness.

To see the envious crystals drip,
Reluctant, from her crimson lip—
To mark the rival day-beams place
The first warm kisses on her face—
To note the racing breezes test
Their fleetness, but to reach her breast—
To see contending roses seek
Expression in her velvet cheek—
To watch the jealous lilies swim
And loll against her snowy limb—
These, these, are but the outward hints
Of all the raptures, graces, tints,
Which, like some precious, Orient pearl,
Accent the beauty of the girl—
Or but reflect in dazzling guise
The soul, the love within her eyes—
The light, the music, and the mirth,
That make our spirits cling to earth.

A DISCUSSION WITH INTERRUPTIONS

By KATE McLAURIN

MARGARET ANDERSON.

DICK ANDERSON.

DICKSON (*the butler*).

SCENE—*A dining-room elegantly furnished. Door at back near right wall. Another door in left wall. Table in centre at which MARGARET ANDERSON sits.*
TIME—*Evening. DICKSON enters.*

DICKSON

Mr. Anderson would like to see you, ma'am.

MARGARET

My husband? Ask him in here.

(*DICKSON bows and retires—re-enters with DICK ANDERSON*)

MARGARET

I thought, of course, you were dining out. Will you have dinner with me?

ANDERSON

I have an engagement at the club, but I am beastly hungry and I will, if you don't mind.

MARGARET

Dickson, serve Mr. Anderson, too.

(*Exit DICKSON*)

MARGARET

I am afraid I'll have to apologize for my dinner. When I am alone I care only for very simple things.

ANDERSON

It will be all right, I assure you. I wanted to see you on rather an important matter; but I'll wait if you wish.

MARGARET

No, this is a very good time. It's about the divorce, I suppose—

ANDERSON

Yes—I saw Little today and he

said— (*Enter DICKSON, who serves Mr. ANDERSON.*)

ANDERSON

You are going out this evening, aren't you?

MARGARET

Yes, to the theater with the Wheats. I very probably won't like the play, for it's one of those tiresome discussions of the marriage problem.

(*Exit DICKSON*)

MARGARET (*eagerly*)

Well, what did Mr. Little say?

ANDERSON

He said that the thing for me to do was to go abroad.

MARGARET

But I'm going abroad—

ANDERSON

I know, but you will have to stay until the divorce is over. It's your suit, you know.

(*Enter DICKSON, who removes dishes and serves them. They sit in silence for a few moments, then ANDERSON with difficulty speaks.*)

ANDERSON

It has been beastly warm, hasn't it?

MARGARET

Why, I don't know; it seemed rather

cold to me— (*Laughs.*) You know, we never could agree on the weather.

ANDERSON

No—that's true.

(*There is a pause. Exit DICKSON*)

MARGARET

When do you sail?

ANDERSON

Just as soon as you are ready to act.

MARGARET

I am quite ready now. But you were telling me what Mr. Little said.

ANDERSON

Your lawyer will tell you the same thing. It will be tried quietly before a referee. I won't fight the suit, so it will soon be over and you'll be free.

MARGARET

And you, too. You've been very kind in this matter, and it is a great satisfaction to know that you have been able to do everything so secretly and sanely. There hasn't been a word in the papers. And now our friends know nothing about it.

ANDERSON

Oh, I don't know—people are always wiser than we think.

(*Enter DICKSON, who serves them, MARGARET trying to be very cordial*)

MARGARET

Do you like your new horses?

ANDERSON

My word, they are corks! The prettiest team in town. Some day I want you to go out behind them. Together you'd create a sensation. Do you ride every day?

MARGARET

No, I don't. I suppose I should, but I have so much else to do.

ANDERSON (*bitterly but politely*)

Clubs, I suppose.

(*Exit DICKSON*)

MARGARET

Did Mr. Little say what we have to give as grounds for the divorce?

ANDERSON

Why do you say *we*? I am not getting the divorce—you are.

MARGARET

It's as much for your good as mine.

ANDERSON

Oh, very well! You'll have to charge me with infidelity.

MARGARET

Oh, there must be some other way!

ANDERSON

No, infidelity isn't a pretty accusation—it always implies chorus girls. But it's the best. (*A pause.*) There is one thing I want to ask you, Margaret, before we wind up.

MARGARET

Well?

ANDERSON

In all the time that I've known you, I've never seen you ruffled or excited. Haven't you any human emotions, or are you just the cake of ice you seem to be?

MARGARET

That's an irrelevant question. The time has passed for personalities between us.

ANDERSON

Oh, well— (*He rises in anger.*)

MARGARET

Please don't leave the table. I don't want a scene before the servants.

(*Enter DICKSON with coffee, which he puts on table. A bell rings and DICKSON retires.*)

ANDERSON

Dickson is getting too old for service.

MARGARET

He was my father's servant. I shall keep him as long as he is able to work.

(*Enter DICKSON with letter*)

DICKSON

A special delivery letter for you, ma'am.

(*MARGARET takes the letter and reads it*)

MARGARET

That will do, Dickson. I'll ring when I want you.

(*Exit DICKSON*)

MARGARET

So we aren't doing things secretly or sanely. It's all over town, and there is a horrid scandal attached to it. Listen to this—

(*Reads letter*)

DEAREST MARGARET:

This is a painful letter and I hope you will forgive me for writing it. But I feel that I must. It's about Dick. I don't know how matters are between you, but of late I have imagined everything was not well. Anyway, Dick is getting himself literally talked about. Anna Davidson is the

woman. It's quite plain to everyone that she is mad about him, and he—well, to say the least—is agreeable to her attentions. People are already pitying you—and I can't stand that. Today I heard that you and Dick were to be divorced and he would marry Anna Davidson. Oh, I hope it isn't true; but something must be done to stop all of this gossiping. Please forgive this letter and believe me,

Your devoted,

AUNT HANNAH.

ANDERSON

Well, Aunt Hannah is, as usual, meddling with something that's none of her business.

MARGARET

She is my aunt and it is her business. It is well someone has my interest at heart—my husband surely hasn't. Now I want to know the truth about the thing.

ANDERSON

I don't quite see your right to know. You are getting a divorce. I am practically a free man. You just said that the time for personalities had passed.

MARGARET

You gain nothing by repeating my words. You are still my husband, and I have a right to know what you are doing. So you are having an affair—a horrid, vulgar affair, with a woman that is older than you—a woman that is a common flirt. And you my husband!

ANDERSON

You threw me over some time ago because I was stupid and not interested in clubs and cults. I had to do something. As for Mrs. Davidson, she is a jolly sort and takes a fellow for what he is. She doesn't expect a man that likes dogs and horses to be keen about music and art.

MARGARET

That's intended as a reflection on me, I suppose. Well, I never thought the time would come when you would compare me with a middle-aged charmer like Anna Davidson.

ANDERSON

I am not comparing you with anyone.

MARGARET

Yes, you are (*almost tearfully*). But

you'll pay for it. You sha'n't have your divorce. I won't give it to you and you can't get it. And you sha'n't go to Europe. If you don't know what's due me—you shall be taught.

ANDERSON

You really mean you aren't going to divorce me?

MARGARET

I mean you sha'n't get a divorce. I may be an icicle. I may be interested in clubs and cults, but I am your wife, and I'm not going to let any other woman—

ANDERSON (*rising from chair joyfully*)

You know what's the matter with you, Margaret—you are jealous!

MARGARET

Jealous! How dare you say that to me? Jealous of Anna Davidson? I am not. But I am not going to let any other woman make a fool of you.

(*She rises and DICK comes to her*)

ANDERSON

No other woman could make a fool of me. You are the only woman. Oh, Peggy darling, I could shout to think you've given up your divorce idea!

MARGARET

Your divorce idea.

ANDERSON

Well, *our* divorce idea. There isn't any other woman in the world. I love you—tonight more than ever. And you care a little, don't you, dear? (*Takes her hand.*)

MARGARET

I don't know—I don't know.

ANDERSON

But I do know—I know. (*He takes her in his arms.*)

(*Enter DICKSON. He hesitates*)

DICKSON

A message from the club, sir. Mr. Brooks says they are waiting for you to have dinner.

ANDERSON

Tell him I can't come.

MARGARET

No, Dickson, tell him Mr. Anderson will be there at once. (*Exit DICKSON.*) You must go, Dick—you know I am going out. But when we get home tonight we'll plan the trip to Europe—together.

GOD OR MAN?

By LULAH RAGSDALE

PHILIP STANTON saw Judith the first Sunday he preached in Bienville. He never forgot the day, nor the scene, nor his many impressions on the morning he took up his new charge.

The little church, hidden away in the shadow of gigantic live oaks, draped with sweeping veils of Spanish moss; the soft throb-throb of the water against the shore, the glimpses of liquid emerald capped with flashing opal and pearl that his eye caught through the open windows, and the invigorating smell of the sea in his eager nostrils; the novelty of the change from the restriction and reserve of solemn Virginia mountains to the breadth and openness and sparkle of this Mexican Gulf Coast, all tended to impress vividly the young clergyman.

The fire of the sun and the savor of the brine seemed to add vigor to his sermon, so that the congregation beamed with satisfaction in its choice of a new pastor; the old one had grown gray and decrepit and finally died in his charge, and even their unwavering allegiance had not quite disguised his tiresomeness during the last few years of his service. There was new blood in this sermon, and new life, new attention in his listeners. It may have been this sense of quivering vitality in the atmosphere that made Judith surpass herself in the rendering of her solo. Philip, never having heard her sing, started when the first note fell on his ear. He had been sitting with drooped head recalling the important points he had omitted in his sermon, when that first long note, full and exquisitely sweet, drew his eyes to the singer in the

choir-loft at his right. She was dressed in black, and through her belt were carelessly drawn the stems of some wild flower that seemed to fit admirably with the song she was singing, "Though my sins be as scarlet."

Ear and eye were alike drawn to her; soul and heart seemed to hang on her notes. When the last one ended and silence settled over the church, Stanton involuntarily waited an instant before he raised his voice in final dismissal.

Mrs. Laberdie, with whom he was to make his home, waited after the service.

"You must meet Miss Rhue," she said. "I had forgotten her. She is invaluable to us—she sang the solo to-day."

"Miss Rhue, did I understand you to say?" he asked as he walked home beside Mrs. Laberdie. "Her voice is superb."

"Oh, yes—she's been on the stage, you know."

"The—stage?"

"Don't let that prejudice you. I think she got quite enough of it, and yet she had a most encouraging start. But she gave it up of her own accord. Judith used to be the gayest, most venturesome girl I ever saw. She was so absolutely intense in everything she did—whether it was liking or hating, or dancing or breaking a horse, a fit of anger or some reckless generosity. She was a regular wildfire. She studied in New York and made her first appearance there. She tried it about a year and a half and then suddenly came home—a changed Judith. She had used all her money cultivating her voice. She is an orphan—and so she began teaching

—voice and piano. She has all she can do now. I suppose she did the best thing, but few girls would have given up such a flattering start. She is so much finer—now, so much more poise, but—she seems sadder, though she never talks of it. I often call her in my mind 'The Bird with the Broken Wing.' Oh, we couldn't get along without Judith in the choir, or the Ladies' Aid Society, or the King's Daughters, or the School. She's the leader in all of them."

"She must be a most admirable young lady."

"And admired. I think she is really loved more than in her tempestuous belledom, when we had hopes of her becoming great and famous. All I wonder is that she hasn't married."

"It's not too late," quietly smiled the new minister. "The Bird with the Broken Wing" had awakened his admiration and, more strangely, his sympathy.

The next time he saw her he made an opportunity to talk with her, and what he remarked during that long walk and talk stimulated his interest. There seemed latent possibilities, hidden depths of feeling, even hints of fires of volcanic nature in those quiet eyes, and all so subordinated to the calm and even duties of life. During the succeeding weeks he saw a great deal of her, and for the most part the side of the broken wing seemed turned toward him, she was always so even, so subdued, so everything but a wildfire. He saw her going with cheerful interest to and from her work. He saw her with firm dignity, guiding her weaker associates in their church meetings. He met her more than once in homes of distress and bereavement, and he saw her tender, reliable, efficient in times of stress.

One forenoon as he walked home with her from church she said:

"I am going out to Beauvoir this afternoon to sing for the old soldiers—they are so sweet to me whenever I go and I love the dear old fellows." The poor, disabled wing seemed quite forgotten in this joyful anticipation. She could soar as high as the hearts of her

father's old comrades with the one left whole.

"May I come and listen too? I will keep quite still."

"You may come—if you will *not* keep still. You must say a few words of cheer to them. We will make it an afternoon for them to remember."

He, too, remembered that afternoon. The old home of the South's only president—the typical Southern mansion, with the great galleries—as its people always would and always will designate their verandas—its great grove of giant oaks draped with moss as if in dreary honor of their defeated master—the group of friendless, sad-eyed old soldiers gathered about the magnetic figure of the daughter of one of their former comrades, borne on the wings of her song almost to the bounds of a new country where there shall be no more war, and no death, no gray age of uselessness and no need of homes for the foregathering of the spent and defeated. Philip embodied some of this in his little talk to them, and they drove to the town together in quiet, thoughtful mood.

By the end of summer he knew that he loved Judith Rhue as he could never love any other woman. He thought he had loved her from the moment that first note of hers had struck the keynote of his soul. Since then her every act had justified his first impression. Her influence had dominated his life. He loved her for her personality—for its outward beauty, its inward sweetness, and for that voice that seemed the verbal expression of both.

In September a concert was arranged for the benefit of the church, and she was to sing. That night he had a glimpse of the other side of her. She seemed the whole buoyant bird, soaring to heights never reached by such earth-bound creatures as himself and other men and women not possessing the wings of some great gift. He had never seen her so lovely.

Mrs. Laberdie had insisted on her singing that audacious, alluring, insouciant thing from "Carmen." It suited the liquid allurements of her voice—the

rich, captivating quality of her beauty. The witchery of "Carmen" and of her music seemed to get into the singer's blood; her eyes burned insolently, or glowed divinely between lids half-closed; her rich figure suggested, in its half-visible swaying, those circling, charming movements of the Spanish cigarette maker. She lived the part, and her audience went wild, clamoring to have her back. She seemed to come back to reality then, for when she had bowed her thanks, her voice swept, as on a wave of passionate pathos, into an air enshrined in the memories of those who heard the music of a generation ago:

"Scenes that are brightest—"

There was a sob in every note, and the eyes so brilliant a moment before now were wide, as with unshed tears. It cut the young clergyman to the quick, it seemed so heartbreakingly real—the feeling she threw into the words:

"Scenes that are brightest

May charm a while,

Hearts that are lightest

And eyes that smile:

When o'er us, above us, kind nature beams,
But with no one to love us—oh, how sad it seems!"

Philip was among the last to seek her and express his thanks for the pleasure she had given. "God gave you a wonderful voice and you are making the best use of it."

She remained silent a moment. "Y-e-s," she finally assented, "I—know—it," but there was a pain in the admission, as if the broken wing had suddenly fluttered, tried to lift itself and then fallen back to its accustomed droop. "I am sure of it," she repeated with more resignation, "and nearly always I am so glad that I am using it—the right way—nearly always. But tonight—the 'Carmen' song—it carried me away: I love to sing—sing always—every day, every night, to great crowds—with lights and costumes and color. I love to enter into the characters—I did so love that part of stage life—the artistic part. It was the other—the real life that—yes, I had to give it up—this is best—but it is dull sometimes—it is monotonous—it is hard—cold—insufficient—oh, I ought

to be ashamed of myself. I am usually so happy in it."

"It is dull," he broke in, "insufficient for you—Judith. You have a great, warm nature. You need love—to love and to be loved—to be worshiped—tended—cared for as a rare and precious woman deserves. That would round out your life. Let me have the right, dear. I love you—give me the right to make your life complete."

She trembled under his touch. Her breath sounded in his ear, coming and going in quick, irregular little gasps. He folded both her soft hands in his. "You will—learn to care for me; I love you so, Judith."

"Learn!" she said below her breath—an ecstasy of wonder and of complete content quelling all the rebellious longings this night had stirred within her. "I have already learned. Oh, Philip—I am so glad—so happy. Now I will be perfectly contented—my life is full—now."

From that night he never again saw a twinge of pain in her eyes. She was fully, radiantly happy, yet with a sane and trustful joy, free from the feverish moods that mark so much love-happiness.

They decided to keep their engagement secret until they should mature their plans for the future. They were still in the full flush of their happiness when Philip, one Sunday in late October, chose as the theme of his sermon the complete charity and tender attitude of Christ toward the penitent sinner, using as his text those memorable words, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

It was a very beautiful sermon—very lenient, full of sweet forgiveness and love. He used, as the focus of it, the figure of that most picturesque sinner of all the ages since Christ came to forgive—the Magdalene. He painted her in her life of sin, in her sudden state of conviction, in her broken penitence. He tenderly told of her tears, her abnegations, and he drew attention not only to the absolute forgiveness extended to her, but the wonderful privilege it accorded her of being first at the

open tomb of the risen Christ. He drew from this a powerful lesson—that not only should we fully forgive a sincere penitent, but we should use every endeavor to forget his past defections, to reinstate him fully in our affections and in our trust.

As he stood below the altar after the sermon, surrounded by a complimenting throng of his flock, Judith came down out of the choir. As he shook the hand she held out to him, she left in his a bit of folded paper. She seemed strangely agitated. Her cheek was without a touch of color, and her voice was unnatural as she said something trite and inconsequential, and then passed down the aisle and was gone.

As soon as he was alone he unfolded the strip of hymnal margin and read:

Meet me in the church at four this afternoon. It is important—nowhere else.

JUDITH.

It had been a sunless morning; it had settled into an afternoon of fading tints. The trees around the church were frost-bitten now, and over their brown limbs spread the thin, gray veiling of that eerie moss. The sky was like pale lead; the gray-green sea lapped heavily against the dark wooden piers.

Philip was there at four, impatient, curious; one moment foreboding—he knew not what—the next laughing at his foolish uneasiness. "It's some music she wants me to hear," he kept telling himself. "And she wishes to try it on the organ." Yet when she came he met her with a presaging heart. It was very dim in the church and the light through the stained window behind the choir fell in drenched-out blues and ambers over her. He made a movement as if to take her to his breast, but she motioned him back.

"Sit—here," she pointed to the edge of the platform. "I want to—get—down—close—to your feet—as—Mary did." It came with a dry, deep sob as she sank to the floor and buried her bare head in her arm against his knee. "I—want—to stay—here, till I've told you all. I have sinned, too. 'Twas that made me leave the stage. I saw

it was not for me. I left it—to—save—my soul. I saw, and I ran away from—temptation. I came back here and I repented. I atoned—atoned—Philip, with prayers and tears—with eating tears, with sleepless nights and, oh, such remorseful days! With every good deed I could find to do—with sacrifices—"

Shocked and dazed, Philip Stanton sat and stared down on her bowed figure and humiliated head. For the moment he could scarcely determine the hurt of the blow which had so unexpectedly fallen on him. His first feeling was a shock of disappointment—a disruption of faith and belief in a being for whom he had held such lofty admiration—such passionate love. That she could have worn so deceptive an exterior—that he could have believed her so angelic, stunned him. Then came a revulsion of all his past feelings for her, an instinctive drawing away, the sudden uprising of that peculiar soul-reserve that we put between ourselves and creatures of either open or secret taint. She felt the delicate, almost unexpressed shrinking of his spiritual being from hers, and she cried out, her voice coming stifledly from under her palms:

"You preached it, Philip—the forgiveness—the forgetfulness—the complete atonement. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white like snow'—you said that this morning. You said, 'Neither do I condemn you.' You said she—Mary Magdalene—was permitted to be first at the tomb."

He remembered. As in a rush, too, came back the past few months when he had seen her every day, when he had observed her dignity, the beauty of her ways, her sweet, lonely life of toil—her abstemiousness in all phases of living, her broad charity, her many good deeds. All the three months of absorbing love rushed back like a flood to plead for her. He believed her when she said she had atoned. Her sin, whatever had been its extent, had left no lasting effect on her; she was sweet and fine as any man could wish a woman to be. He leaned toward her

—where she waited trembling, bowed and humiliated at his feet—leaned, put out his hand—and then all the horror, all the revulsion he had ever felt against sin held him in suspense. He had preached forgiveness, Christ's absolute forgiveness and unqualified acceptance of the service of the Magdalene—he had, himself, forgiven unqualifiedly many sinners—but this was so different. Sin in the abstract—sin that does not touch you personally, is so different from the ugly, concrete thing that presses you upon the quickest side of your trusting heart, that obtrudes upon your own life, that asks admittance into your own home, that begs to sit beside you at your own fireside. The penitent stranger may receive your unstinted blessing as he starts on his distant way, but a man's wife, a man, too, who worshiped the sanctity of woman—who hated impurity far more than any physical loathsomeness—

"He that is without sin among you," the lips of the Christ from a painting on the opposite wall seemed speaking through the twilight of the silent church.

Stanton had been a very young man once—a careless young man as others are—this was before he had felt the call to the ministry take hold upon him. Distinctly the words fell across the tense silence from the lips of that justice-loving Christ—and Stanton heard them. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." He would not do that—never would he do that

to any sorrowing woman—but make her his wife! Did forgiveness require as much as that? Would Christ's teaching reach to that extent? He must think—he who demanded perfect purity in woman—yet who unalterably loved the penitent one at his feet.

"I must think this out, Judith," he stooped and raised her gently, yet with a certain reserve. "This has come so suddenly, so unexpectedly—I must have a little time to think."

She drew away from his touch and regarded him, hardly comprehending. Suddenly she rose to her feet and her eyes flashed as she said quietly but with great intensity:

"I will spare you the necessity, Philip. I see I was mistaken in my conception of religion—precepts droned out from the pulpit are not to be interpreted as being in any way applicable to real, practical conditions. Forgiveness is all very well as a Biblical incident, a theme for a sermon, but to be asked to actually forgive—well, it is a farcry from Christ to the modern minister. I would not disturb the serenity of your life with such a problem. Good-bye."

The next morning Mrs. Laberdie met him. "I have just come from the station," she said, "to see Judith off. She decided only last night, she says, to go to New York. We are all amazed—she seemed so happy here. She says she is going back on the stage."

THE REFORMER

By ANNIE L. MUZZEY

WHOSO reforms himself reforms the world.
 When he has conquered his own kingdom, then,
 With flaming banner to the winds unfurled,
 He marches forth with power and conquers men.

THE SERIOUS SIDE

By OWEN OLIVER

THERE is a serious side to most people; but there did not seem to be one to Winifred Carter.

It is my habit, as a scientist, to label the specimens of humanity with whom I come in contact; and I had not been five minutes on board the *Devonshire Casile* before I labeled her as a particularly light-hearted and fascinating little flirt. The label did not imply disapproval. If a girl is twenty and light-hearted, it is her fortune rather than her fault; and her fascination came from nature, not from art.

That she had a way with men was beyond question. She was wheedling a better cabin out of the purser when I first noticed her. The next time she was persuading the captain to show her over the boat deck. The third time four stewards were competing to find her deck chair. She had it placed outside my cabin—which was on the promenade deck—when it was found. I was doing a little unpacking before the ship started, and I could not help hearing her conversation with an elderly lady who had come to see her off.

"I do hope, Winifred," the lady implored, "that you will remember you are going out to be married."

"I'll write it on a luggage label and hang it over the looking-glass," Miss Winifred offered gaily. She did not laugh outright, but all her speech was a laugh.

"It is not a jesting matter, Winifred," the elder lady insisted; "and you know quite well what I mean."

"You can't mean that I would flirt," Miss Winifred suggested, "because I've told you that I sha'n't, auntie."

"I don't believe you could help flirting if you tried," said the aunt mournfully. "I sha'n't have a moment's peace till you are safely landed and married."

"And after that someone else won't have a moment's peace," said the girl merrily; "but you needn't worry this time. I've thought it all out—how to escape from flirtation—and I've made a splendid plan!"

"What is it?" her aunt inquired suspiciously.

"A man," she confessed.

"A man!" the poor lady groaned.

"There's bound to be a man, you see, auntie. I must talk to someone; and I—really, I think a man is best! So I've chosen a harmless one."

"No man is harmless, Winifred."

"This one is! I couldn't possibly flirt with him. He's a professor, and full of insects—his mind, I mean. He's going to South Africa about the cattle plague. The purser told me."

In my amazement I dropped the coat I was hanging up. I am a "professor"; and I was going to South Africa about the cattle pest.

"He's frightfully old," Miss Winifred continued; "quite forty." (That was not correct; but it was before I shaved off my beard.) "But he isn't fossily. He's big and dark and—Mephistophelean! And he has a love of a beard. You can see he's horribly clever. I shall like to talk to somebody clever, because—you see it will remind me of you! He will tell me all about insects—ugh!—and call me 'my child,' as you do, and think I am very nice and young and silly, and never dream I am grown up enough to flirt with! So I shall be

safe for the voyage. Now isn't it a sensible plan?"

"You are talking nonsense, as usual, Winifred," her aunt stated. "Dr. Richardson—I presume that is who you mean—is a very learned gentleman; I read all about him in the newspaper this morning. He will not waste his time listening to the frivolous conversation of a very foolish girl. I do not suppose he will even notice you."

"He'll have to," the girl declared. "If he comes along perhaps you'll see. This is his chair—there's his name on it! My arm is on it, too. If he wants it, he'll have to say 'Excuse me'; and I shall say— What shall I say, I wonder?"

I wondered, too! So I stepped out of the cabin and laid my hand on the chair.

"Excuse me!" I said politely.

Miss Winifred withdrew her arm from the chair with remarkable rapidity. Her aunt half rose from hers and shot several magazines and a pair of opera glasses from her lap. I picked them up and restored them, and sat down in my own chair.

"I think there is nothing for it but to make friends," I suggested. "People always do on a voyage, you know, and it is only anticipating events. As Miss Winifred says, I am frightfully old! And if I am Mephistophelian enough to keep her out of mischief on the voyage, I shall be glad."

The elderly lady's apologies occupied some minutes. When they were concluded I turned to Miss Winifred, whose amusement had begun to get the better of her confusion.

"What have you to say for yourself, young lady?" I inquired.

"Nothing," she admitted, struggling not to laugh.

"You throw yourself on the mercy of the court?"

"Who is the court? You or auntie?"

"I am!"

"Then I throw myself on the mercy of the court. Auntie will tell you my antecedents and previous convictions. I'll walk round to hide my blushes till you're ready to pass sentence." And

away she tripped. I heard her laugh as she went, and I laughed too.

"Really," I said, "I think your niece wants a friend on the voyage. So if you will let me 'elder-brother' her a little—? I am not a flirting man, and I am nearly double her age—and I like her."

"Thank you," her aunt assented eagerly. "Thank you very much, Dr. Richardson. Winnie is a good girl, but—but so irresponsible. Perhaps she will listen to you. You see, she is going out to be married. His name is Manners—Charlie Manners. They have known each other since they were babies, but I never dreamed of anything else. It was a sudden engagement, just as he was going out, a year ago. I didn't think it would last, for they both speak first and think afterward. However, it has. Perhaps when they are married—if they ever are!—they will become more sober. But I've had it on my mind all the time that she would find someone else on this voyage, and break it off; or that Charlie would, on account of her flirtations. You won't let her, will you?"

"I'm afraid I can scarcely promise that," I demurred. "She will hardly own my authority."

"Couldn't you get her to promise?" her aunt entreated. "If she promised, she would. She's like that."

"Umph!" I said doubtfully. "She's rather—" I was going to say "a handful"; but she rounded the corner and came smilingly toward us, and I altered the expression. "She's very bonny," I said, with a sudden feeling of brotherliness to this gay young creature. "I'll try— Well, miss?"

"The sentence?" she asked.

"The sentence," I said, "is very severe. You are to be in my charge for the voyage; and you are to promise to listen to my advice."

"I always listen to advice," she said demurely; "but I don't often take it, you see."

"You'll take mine," I retorted calmly; "you'll see."

"Very well," she agreed. "I'll come up for judgment when called upon. It's

a promise, auntie, so you needn't worry your dear old self. The professor is terribly stern. Just look at him!"

So Miss Winifred was left in my charge, and I arranged for seats together at table and took her in to tea and dinner and walked her round the deck afterward. She was wonderfully bright and amusing, and reminded me more of a kitten than anything else; but I did not judge her to be so thoughtless for others as for herself. At any rate, she showed at the outset a kindly thoughtfulness for me.

"Now, policeman," she said, when we had been around eight times—which made a mile—"you want to go and play bridge in the smoking-room, I know, but you are afraid to trust me alone. So I'll go to bed and relieve you from duty. Poor policeman!"

"No, Winnie," I said—we had agreed to drop the "Miss"—"I'm not in the least afraid to trust you; and I'm not going to be a policeman. I'm a big brother; and you're going to tell me things because you trust me. And your big brother doesn't want to send you off to bed in order to go and play cards."

I adopted this policy throughout the voyage. I never objected to her making friends with people—and in fact assisted her to do so—and never interrupted her *tête-à-têtes*, but as a matter of fact we made friends with the same set and we were both fond of deck games, so we were a great deal together in the daytime. In the evenings I generally played cards while she was dancing, but I always left off in time to have the last dance with her and to walk or sit with her afterward. A young girl can't be expected to go to bed directly the dancing is over, and a cautious big brother, taking a sister out to be married, doesn't leave her to sit out with her partners under the tropical moon; especially if he is not very confident of the strength of her attachment to her *fiancé*; and I was not.

"You see," she told me one evening, "Charlie and I are just alike. We never can be serious about anything. We

just thought it would be fun to be engaged. If he had stopped home, I dare say we should have thought it fun to break it off again; but when you are away from each other you can't. You don't know how the other one might feel about it, all those miles off. And he's so nice and such a good fellow. I dare say we shall laugh through life together pretty comfortably. Only—only, I think there's a serious side to me, if anyone had troubled to find it." She played the piano on the rail. "Anyhow, it's too late now, isn't it?"

"Yes," I agreed. "Yes, he's asked you to go out and marry him, and you're going. I hope you'll see a little of the serious side of life together, but not too much of it—I think he's a good fellow, Winnie."

"Oh, yes!" she said. "And, after all, it's as bad for him as for me!"

Which seemed to me a curious apology for marriage. Indeed, Winnie's marriage was a great trouble to me. For I had grown very fond of her; I feared that some day she would wake up and find the serious side to herself and I did not know what would happen then.

The serious side showed itself on the last night of the voyage. "Auld Lang Syne" had been sung, and the friendly groups had split up into friendlier pairs—real friendship is always a matter for two—and she and I were standing together looking out over the sea. Suddenly she clutched my sleeve.

"I am afraid!" she cried.

I did not answer, only put her arm in mine; for I was afraid too, terribly afraid for my pretty, warm-hearted, irresponsible little Winnie.

"Make me brave," she entreated. "Say something. I have learned to depend on you."

"You can always depend on me, Winnie," I said. "Always! All your life."

"I know that," she said. "Indeed I know."

We were silent for a long time before she spoke again.

"If you were really my brother," she asked, "you would say it was too late

to be afraid, wouldn't you? That it is past altering?"

"If I were your real brother," I said slowly, "and if I knew that Manners was a good fellow—kind and loyal and upright—"

"He is certainly all that," she said firmly.

"And fond of you—"

"He is 'fond' of me," she said. "I do not know if he is—more."

"He has probably grown fonder, Winnie. He has asked you to come out and marry him. He has been out here alone—missing you and thinking of you, and—I expect he has thought a great deal of your coming and of you. You are fond of him, too?"

"Yes." She sighed. "I am 'fond' of him, too; but—I won't be a coward and put it on you. I know quite well what I ought to do and I will do it; and—God bless you, brother, dear."

And suddenly she turned and ran below; and I stood a long time looking steadily down at the sea. For the love that I had for Winnie was not a brother's love; but she must never know.

Charlie was a handsome fellow and a gentleman, and I liked him the moment that he came aboard; but he was strangely different from the careless, merry boy whom I had expected. In fact, when he was not jesting—and he appeared to jest with difficulty—he looked very serious indeed. He seemed to take an immediate liking to me—all real likings are immediate and instinctive—and on the second evening of our stay at the Queen's Hotel—that oasis in South Africa—when he left rather early and I walked a little way with him, he confided in me.

"You are the sort of chap that anybody trusts, sir," he said. "May I speak to you—about Win and me?"

"Yes, Charlie," I said. I feared what was coming.

"You are fond of her and you like me a bit, sir, I think?"

"I like you a lot, old chap," I told him.

"It's this: Win and I are—you know what we are; but I've changed lately. Perhaps she has, too, but—there's a

difference. She doesn't really care for me; but she doesn't care for anyone else—at least, not that I know. I don't care for her—at least I admire her and think a lot of her, and I'm awfully fond of her in a way, only— Well, there's—somebody else. I didn't realize it till I'd asked her to come out. It isn't myself so much. It's the other one. She cares. Mind you, I'll be a good husband to Win and never let her find out; and I know it's the only thing to do, but— Look here, sir. The reason I spoke was this: I thought Win was sure to flirt on the voyage; and perhaps she'd got to like someone else better; and it was no use getting married if neither of us wanted to." He looked anxiously at me.

"No," I said slowly. "She didn't flirt. She was mostly with me." Our eyes met for a moment and held one another. "No, Charlie. She and I didn't flirt. She looks on me as quite an old man. I *am* too old for her. I should regard myself as out of the question for her, under any circumstances. So we needn't discuss my feelings in the matter."

"No, sir," he replied quietly. "I rather thought—but you know best—I—I promise you I'll be jolly good to her."

"I think you would be, Charlie," I said; "but you must not marry her, feeling as you do."

"Oh, but I must!" he said decidedly. "She's come out with all her things, and her people are waiting for the cablegram. Of course I must. *She* says so—the other one— She's a good girl, professor."

"So is Winnie, Charlie. It will hurt her woman's pride; but that is better than a loveless marriage. Can't you trust me, of all people, to do what is best for her? And for you too, my boy?"

"Yes," he said slowly. "I— Tell her I'll let her make a doormat of me, if she likes. Dear, jolly, little Win! I'm a beast of the first class. Good night, professor."

"Good night," I said.

I walked back slowly, planning how I should break it to Winnie in the morn-

ing; but I found her waiting at the gate in the moonlight, with a wrap over her shoulders.

"I wanted my big brother," she said, smiling up at me and taking my arm.

"I've got to hurt my little sis," I said. "Come along the side path, dear."

And then I told her. We had wandered round to the edge of the sea before I had finished; and we stood silently looking out over the waters.

"And now you can't stop me from flirting," she said suddenly, and laughed that gay young laugh of hers. "Can you?"

The great moment of a man's life always comes suddenly. I had never dreamed that she could care for me as I cared for her; but I knew it in an instant from the sound of her voice and the touch of her arm, and I looked down at the gay little face upraised in the moonlight and put my arm round her.

"Sweetheart!" I said, "I can!"

And she laughed and cried and clung to me, hid her face on my shoulder and raised it recklessly in turn.

"Love can do most things in this world of ours," she vowed; and I knew that Winifred's life had found its serious side and mine its bright one.

THE SEA-BORN

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

OH, my Heart!
 To see before I die
 The black clouds gather
 Like midnight in the sky;
 And watch the sea rein back
 Her quivering, white-maned pack
 That instant ere she flings them free
 To thunder down the track.

Oh, my Heart!
 But once to watch again
 The East wind swinging,
 The stinging whips of rain;
 To feel upon my face
 The sharp, salt spray, and chase
 The flying foam the combers fling
 Like dust-clouds in their race.

Oh, my Heart!
 To feel again the warm
 Exultant youth within us
 Go shouting with the storm
 But once—ere yet we turn
 Where peaceful candles burn
 Above the quiet chimney-seat
 Where Age may rest—and yearn.

THE OTHER WOMAN

By DORIS HILL

THEY had both been broken-hearted—two storm-tossed pieces of driftwood, as tired in mind and body they came with the first spring breezes to find forgetfulness and oblivion in this little out-of-the-way corner of the mountains. And there they had found each other. He came first. Suffering had drawn lines in his face, but they were the signs of victory, though he had nearly died. Of course it had been a love affair. It always is. There had been but one—and all the love of his mature manhood he had concentrated upon the One Woman; had lived for it, dreamed of it, clung to this great love—and one day he had spoken of it. It was on Good Friday, and it was the thirteenth. After it was all over, he had walked on blindly in a cool April rain, not heeding—not knowing where his steps led. Then he had found himself at the door of a little Catholic church, found himself inside. He had stared dully at the great crucifix draped in black, with the Christ looking down at him in agony. Someone was softly moving about repeating the Stations of the Cross, and the little red flame on the crape-covered altar flickered in silence. Subconsciously, from without, the sounds of the street reached him, but he could not comprehend that the world still went on living, laughing. He shuddered at the thought. Laugh? Would he ever laugh again? And in his agony he even had measured his own suffering with His on the cross—the Gethsemane of a strong man, when the foundations of life crumble.

For a long time he had remained in the church, he knew not whether hours or months. As yet he could not think.

It had all happened so suddenly. In his own passionate, overpowering love he had never dreamed of any possibility of its not being returned. Never before had he given much thought to women, until Elaine came, and then he had thought his love must sweep all before it. He could not realize that it was all over. There was only that stunned feeling, and with it the thought that Elaine did not love him. Elaine did not love him! Afterward would come the realization, the thought of the home he had meant to prepare—the pride he would have taken in her; all her little pretty ways—all the reminders. There would be facetious inquiries made by friends who did not understand, and he would have to meet his mother's questioning looks. The real suffering was yet to come.

When the light filtering through the stained-glass windows was quite gone, and only the little red, flickering lamp on the altar remained, the sexton had touched him on the shoulder. And the man had taken up his cross and gone out into the night.

Now, two years later, he had met the Other Woman. On the night after his arrival she came, dressed in black, which belied her youth, with brown, questioning eyes and an indefinable something that attracted his attention. He saw her but a moment. Like himself, she evidently wished to make no acquaintances, thought the man.

No, she did not. It was the one desire of the girl's heart just then to escape speaking to anybody. For as the man had his story, so the girl had hers. It was a very simple little story—only a very young girl's love for a man totally

unsuitable, and she had seen things "sensibly" before it was too late. But it hurt a great deal, and there had been no one to comfort the girl when it was all over.

So, through some strange caprice of fate the two met in this neck of the woods. It was but a tribute to the romantic essence of it that they were never introduced. For the next morning the man, moved by an irresistible mood, arose early and struck out on the little trail up the mountain, and there he found the girl. She wore a big white hat and a white shirtwaist. The other touches about her dress were black and the man wondered if she was in mourning. He did not betray his presence at first, but watched her from the abrupt turn of the rock that had brought her in sight. She stood out tall and strong against the sky, looking dreamily at the distant mountain ranges. It was an odd situation. The man was not sure that he liked it very well. He had so long avoided women that he did not know just how to make his presence known without startling her. On the other hand, he reflected, she did not look like one who would be easily startled. Presently the man saw her bosom heave in a deep sigh, and at the same moment she withdrew her eyes from the mountains and turned them quietly, questioningly upon the man. He saw that they were very brown. For a moment he was surprised that he made this reflection. And she had not been startled! He did not realize that he was still looking at her, and the questioning look in the girl's eyes deepened. Then with a start he recollected himself. The next logical thing to say was, "I beg your pardon," and he said it.

The girl's expression changed gradually into a smile that was in her eyes as well as on her lips. She, in turn, had taken note of the man's face, the firm lines about the mouth, the tenacious chin. She saw the little creases at the corners of the eyes, and wondered how they looked when he smiled. But there was a tired look now, as after a great struggle. And the girl understood.

So their acquaintance began. From the first there was an unspoken wish not to talk that both respected. And there was instead that perfect merging of personalities, without effort, without words, with full understanding of each other's moods, that was infinitely restful to both.

So time slipped away. Their parting was quite matter-of-fact. It was the girl's turn to go first, and the man drove her to the station. "It was such a relief that you haven't made me talk; it has all been so restful," the girl said.

"Just let you think your own thoughts?" returned the man. And so they parted. The girl journeyed on and went to a far city. The man suddenly discovered the country turning bleak with the first fall of the leaves. The wind whistled in the treetops and around mountain crags, and the lake with the screaming wild birds took on a chill look. The man packed up and went home.

He plunged into business with renewed vigor. His mother's devotion was twice as strong, if that were possible, and she watched his every move with an ever increasing jealousy. For a while he had thoughts of the brown-eyed girl, then these, too, were submerged in the press of his work.

One cold afternoon in the latter part of October he sat before a fire in the library. The wind whistled outside, and drove gathering clouds before it, and the treetops moaned like living things. The little clock ticking on the mantel was the only sound in the room, and now and then a few coals changed places in the grate. The man leaned forward, pillowing his head in his hands; the smoke from his cigar soared higher and higher, gathering his thoughts with it, drawing him out of himself. If only now . . .

An idea seized him. What if he married? No, of course he could never love again. But it would give him more prestige in his profession as well as enhance his social standing. Above all, it would take responsibility from his mother's shoulders. And—he was a man. It was the first time the

thought had come to him, since—since that other time . . . The little clock ticked away—strange, painful minutes, heaped full and running over with memories of the past. The man sat looking into the fire as the flames marched and countermarched among the coals. The embers stirred and a few sparks sprang up, flickered and went out. Then he thought of another night and another fire. It had been upon the mountain, and the brown-eyed girl had been there. She sat on the other side of the fire, and with a stick pointed out the pictures she saw in the flames. She had such little funny ways, reflected the man. He wondered how old she really was. Sometimes she had seemed so very young. And he was thirty-five. Just why he made this comparison of their ages he could not have told.

Outside the twilight deepened into darkness. The wind rose and whispered eerily around the corners, beating the snow against the windows. The fire was dying. And the man in his loneliness buried his head in his arms on the table.

Then it was he decided to write her, just a few lines on the back of a card containing a view of the mountain. He could reach her at the Writers' Club. And it was with a strange elation at his heart that he sent the message.

When the girl received the card she laughed happily. "And he thought of me," she murmured, "the man that didn't make me talk." In her heart the girl had thought of him many, many times, and in moments when the old hurt came back to her she had knelt down and prayed, prayed also for this man who had come to her on the mountain, for she knew that he had had his suffering. And she had prayed that God would give him strength, and make him happy, and let him see the joy of life, even as she prayed that she be given a little ray of light; and perhaps, some time, they might see each other again—but there her prayer always stopped: she was not sure that it was right to pray in that way. And

besides, she had no clearly defined idea of what she wanted to pray for beyond that.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning and the snow lay crisp and white underfoot as the man leaped out of his sleigh and ran up the steps to his office. There lay the customary pile of mail, and he could not help but feel a little thrill of anticipation at sight of it as he threw off his coat. Of course he would take his time and read each letter as it came. And he did. When halfway through the pile he started. It was so unmistakably the girl's letter. It was square and white, the handwriting feminine but firm. "H-m," said the man. Then he opened it.

"Would you really like to hear from me?" he read. "Well, I am conquering New York . . . I have thought of you so often," the girl went on frankly.

He wrote her a long letter. He told her all he had thought and felt on that lonesome night; he was sure she would understand. "And," he concluded, "I want you to write me all about yourself, what you have been doing, and if you are happy." And in an ecstasy of feeling he lost himself, and wrote on and on, until he had told what a comfort he had found in being near her in their quiet companionship; told what led to his coming to the mountains . . . "something very sacred, that comes into all our lives, called love," he wrote. Then he told her how his soul had been torn and ravaged, of his subsequent fight, and events up to the time he saw her on the summit. "That morning was the beginning of a new era," he ended.

It was the pent-up yearning of a heart long silenced and steeled against this very thing that at last opened the floodgates and swept all before it. For just as sure as a man steels himself against the influence and society of woman, one of two things will happen: either nature reasserts itself with redoubled force and sweeps down all barriers, or the man will become that most despicable of all—a woman-hater, a

sexless thing, a libel on both God and man.

He rang for a boy to mail the letter, then feverishly went through the morning's work. Toward noon his head was again cool, and he leaned back in his chair. "What will she think? How many different kinds of a fool will she think me?" the man questioned himself again and again. The days came and went miserably, until again a square, white letter lay in the little pile of mail. This time he could not wait, but read it first.

The girl had understood. She had not thought him a fool, after all. Her sympathy meant much, but above all, his pride had been saved. For with her whole soul the girl was comforting him. She had felt almost no surprise at the passionate outpouring about the Other Woman in his letter. In some way, it seemed perfectly natural that this man should come to her for comfort. Other men had come to her in the same way, she reflected; and it had always been her lot to give—give of her very soul, as she now would to this man. But never in all her life had she herself asked for comfort; not one little word escaped her when her own sorrow had come. No one had known. Suddenly the girl felt very tired. In her mind the thought of this man had become a source of strength to lean on when her weak moments came; ever since those days in the mountains she had thought of how strong and brave he really was, how she could read in his face that he had suffered but made no sound. And this mental picture she had cherished, and unconsciously had reached out to it for strength. And now—even *he* came to her for help! Demanding instead of giving!

The girl read the letter again, and her eyes filled. How he must have suffered! And because she had once passed that way, she alone could understand. A yearning came to her, like that a mother feels toward a little child that had been grievously hurt. If he demanded, she would give to the very last of her comfort and sympathy and strength. She must help him if pos-

sible—yes—even in an effort to bring them together—he and—the Other Woman. The girl grew pale. Who—was—the Other Woman? Well, what did that matter? With a little tired gesture she pushed the hair from her forehead and closed her eyes. No, nothing mattered very much—now.

And then she sat down to write. She forgot self—forgot the Other Woman, and sent out a message full of yearning, caressing words, that was as a spring breeze to the man who read it; it was as if she stretched out her hands to him, and like a little child gathered him in her arms to soothe and laugh and cry over his hurt.

And so it happened that through the winter each grew to be a necessary factor in the other's life. After that first vehement letter the man made but few references to himself, but both treasured the memory of that first confidence that had brought them closer. As the holiday season approached the girl felt really lonely. The night before Christmas she bought a bunch of holly that filled her arms from the boy on the corner, and hastened home. She paused before switching on the light and stood looking out over the city. It was snowing, and the merry tinkle of sleigh-bells mingled with the less musical gongs of the street cars. She saw a little, tiny, frozen newsboy standing on the corner of Broadway, stamping his feet, and with his hands drawn up into his sleeves in a frantic effort to keep out the cold, his little voice rising shrilly above the noise of the street from time to time.

"Who was it said—

The child who is not clean and neat,
With lots of toys and things to eat,
He is a naughty child I'm sure . . ."

thought the girl.

The snow increased until it was almost a blizzard. Pedestrians increased their speed, almost fell against each other, but it was a good-natured holiday crowd, bound for bright, warm homes somewhere. The girl hugged her bunch of holly in the dark. Then she wondered where the man was tonight. She knew he must be thinking of her. It had all been so strange—since that

first letter, and with the exception of a few references to it the man never mentioned the Other Woman, and by intuition she knew that he did not want her to refer to it. It was evidently something irrevocably past and done with. A strange, exulting little thrill seized the girl that this should be so. Then a little line of perplexity appeared between her eyes. With a vague, troubled look she glanced down the snow-covered street once more, now more than ever the Great White Way. The little newsboy had disappeared.

As she switched on the electric light she noticed a letter and package both addressed in the man's handwriting. She opened the box first. It contained an exquisitely bound volume of Longfellow. She turned the leaves and found several passages marked. The first was from "The Courtship of Miles Standish": So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,

Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,
Rushed together at last. . . .

The girl caught sight of her face in the mirror and saw it blush to the roots of her hair, then as quickly pale. A queer sensation was in her throat. Quickly she opened the letter. "Dearest," she read, "know that I am thinking of you now—this moment. I am lonely, dear; perhaps you are. I want you, and I think I could make you happy. Will you be my wife?"

A disconnected enough little note, but the girl was not thinking of that. The most salient thing to her about it was the entire absence of the word "love." He wanted her—demanding instead of giving! And he was honest not to speak of love; they had known each other so little. It would have seemed almost impossible.

But behind all her logic was the knowledge that there had been another woman, who had been able to inspire such a love that it had nearly killed. What that other woman had ravaged and trampled under foot the girl had picked up with tender hands and cared for. Was it fair that she should now be offered the crumbs?

But there was no bitterness in her

heart as she sat down to write, only the thought that he needed her! "And," she ended, "don't you see we must know each other better? Do you know I have been thinking of our mountain so much tonight. I wonder how Christmas looks up there!"

The man thought that last sentence very childish, but it gave him an idea. The more he thought of it, the better it seemed. "When the snow and cold are gone"—he wrote—"in the spring, dear, come again to our mountain; then we can live it all over again."

And so the days went by until at last the green buds on the trees in Union Square burst into long tassels and pussywillows; the leaves and debris that had filled the fountain in the centre were cleared away, and a clear stream shot upward, to fall in a sparkling shower on the leaves of the pond-lilies just beginning to appear on the surface of the water.

The girl was packing up to go to the mountains. It was in the nature of things that she should be happy, if for no other reason than that she was young, and it was spring, and the woods called to her, and she was in a fever of anticipation to know how it would all end. The man's letters had become more and more urgent, and though she would not acknowledge it she had grown to care for him. He belonged to her life—to herself, because she had read his soul and understood. And he had asked her to be his wife. She ought to be very happy. And as she was only twenty-two, it was natural that when she boarded the train there was a song in her heart and a smile on her lips.

And not many nights later they stood again on the summit, with the moon casting their shadows down the mountain. The man had met her that morning at the little ramshackle station. And as she stepped off the train he had kissed her! Somehow since then they had avoided looking into each other's eyes, and the girl wondered why. There was a strange silence between them now. The man had been speaking of his mother, of his home, and at

last of the Other Woman. It was like a knife to the girl. Then she said: "Tell me, you cannot say you really *love me?*" The man was equally frank. "A passionate love comes only once in a life," he said. "Sound, common-sense affection is the only thing on which to build a home. Love—love is a disease."

The girl sat very pale and still.

"You know what a man wants," he continued, his face turned toward the distant peaks, as the moon outlined their bulk. "If a man is not an absolute woman-hater he wants to marry sometime. He wants a helpmeet. Then there is my mother. She is getting old and needs someone younger to lean on and assume the responsibilities of the household. And then—I thought I could help you . . ."

She rose with a shudder. "Don't," she said; "please!" For the first time the man looked at her and their eyes met. The girl's face was white, and her brown eyes looked unnaturally large as they searched the very depths of his own. "Oh, how could you!" she breathed.

For a full minute they stood thus. Then the girl swayed, and in a second he had caught her in his arms and crushed her to him. "God, what a brute I am!" he cried as he held her close; "what an infernal brute!"

But she recovered herself and pushed him away. "I understand," she began quietly. "I am to take it for granted you do not love me—no, don't interrupt," as he made a motion to speak. "We do not love each other," in a hard voice. "But you want me to take a burden from your mother's shoulders. Under her supervision you would incorporate me as a kind of servant in your home. You want a wife from a strictly utilitarian standpoint. Isn't that true?"

The man was silent.

"You want someone able to represent you socially," the girl went on mercilessly . . . "and—and to be the mother of your children."

Yes, she could say it, for nothing mattered now. After the cold-blooded

frankness of the man she could afford to speak out fearlessly in her purity.

"And—I am glad you told me. It is so much better to be frank than to play at something which neither of us meant."

The moon had risen higher. The girl never forgot that scene. The man sat with bowed head in silence, and from somewhere came the call of an owl. Without a word she turned and went down the trail.

The next day the girl was friendly but distant. And the man felt it like a whip. "Did you sleep?" he asked, and she answered, "A little."

"Dearest, are you angry with me?" And he forced her face very near his own. "No," she answered coldly, "I am not angry."

Every advance was met by that cool friendliness. As yet the man had not realized the brutality of his words the night before, for he had not really meant to say the things he had. And with a man's helplessness he was at a loss to know how to heal the breach. He felt he could not bear to lose her, while the girl felt a strange fascination for him. He represented something so novel and unusual to her mind; something totally incredible and strange, and therefore fascinating.

As the days wore on she felt that same old power of attraction that he had exercised over her the summer before; and the man found that she became more necessary to him every day. They came to speak quite openly of their strange relationship. "We are eminently sensible," said the girl one day, "but somehow I feel as if something had gone out of my life. I used to look for your letters so."

"Yes, and when you didn't write I thought something had gone wrong," he replied. Then suddenly—"I want you to meet my mother. We can arrange it very easily by telegraphing."

The girl pondered a moment. "Very well," she said. "It will be fair to both."

So the two set out for the telegraph office and sent the message, and were feeling almost on their old friendly

footing when the reply came. . . . His mother could not receive a guest at present as she was not well. And that was all.

The man knew that jealousy of the girl had prompted the answer. He knew also that the girl with her clear penetration would divine it. And it was with set teeth he took her with him to the woods before showing the message. He threw himself headlong in the grass beside her. "You will understand, won't you, dear?" he said, handing over the telegram.

Of course the girl understood. It was only too evident that this mother resented whatever place any other woman would find in the life of her son. Then the injustice of it all surged up in her, the heartlessness of the man, the unkindness of this mother. And she was alone—so utterly alone in the world. But she *would* not let the lump in her throat get the best of her, and her eyes flashed as she looked up at the man.

His head was down in his arms in the grass and great sobs shook his body. Instantly the girl was down beside him, gathering his head into her arms, like a little child, soothing and comforting, as she had done in the letters.

Like a flash it came to her how much he really meant in her life; that henceforth he would be that life itself, for in spirit she had given too much to this man to ever be quite able to disentangle her life from his. With the realization she forgot all else—all save that she could never, never leave him; that he was hers for ever, and ever, and ever.

"Dearest," she whispered, "look at me." And as the man turned toward

her he caught the infinite, passionate yearning in the eyes of the girl, as unbidden she bent down and kissed him.

In one bound the man was on his feet, crushing the girl to him, kissing her again and again. "You do—you do love me!" he panted; "and nothing on earth is strong enough to hold you from me. Don't you see what you have grown to be to me—that I love you, love you, love you? That I can't live without you? And I didn't know what I was asking of you that other night, but now I know what a brute I was! You will forgive me, won't you, little one? And you will come with me and be married tonight, and when you meet my mother it will be as my wife," he finished triumphantly. "Say you will," he rushed on; "say it, sweetheart. Say it, say it!"

She lay limp in his arms while the storm passed over her head. It seemed like a dream. She was crushed close against his breast, and every heartbeat of the man sent the blood rushing to her temples until she was nearly senseless. She was floating in an ocean of something endless and enchanting and wonderful, conscious only of the strong arms around her. . . .

It was in the spot they had met a year ago. The moon cast their shadows down the mountain as it had done that other night and silvered the outlines of the distant mountains; somewhere in the stillness a bird called. It was the supreme moment.

The man's voice sounded far, far away. "Say it, sweetheart! Say it; say it!"

"I will," breathed the girl.

'T WAS EVER THUS!

SPECTOR—Your new house doesn't look much like the architect's original design.

VICTOR—No; but it looks more like it than the cost looks like his original estimate.

PLAYS THAT PASS IN A NIGHT

By CHANNING POLLOCK

"THIS," said Wilton Lackaye, as he started back to America after the unsuccessful engagement of "Children of the Ghetto" in London—"this is an example of the adage: 'Small profits; quick returns.'"

Almost every theatrical production made in New York during the month of October afforded another example. The return, in nearly every instance, was to that graveyard of managerial hopes, the storehouse. If you can imagine scenery going out to see the people, as people often go out to see the scenery, perhaps you will indulge my whimsy to the extent of fancying the posting in scene-docks of placards like this:

FIRST EXCURSION OF THE SEASON!
TO BEAUTIFUL WALLACK'S THEATER

Where There Will Be a Stop of
Two Weeks!

See the Arctic First-Nighters, the Free
List, the Fields of Eternal Snow.

ROUND TRIP TICKETS NOW ON SALE!

It was a most uneventful month.

I hate being a calamity howler. I should like to say that everything presented in our theaters is good, and that nothing is the least bit better than anything else. I am expected to do that; scores of managers who call me by my first name expect me to do it, and are grieved and ill-natured when I don't. But there is no getting around the fact that October was an uneventful month—even a disastrous month. One went out of town for a little while, and got back to find that two or three new plays had been shown in his absence, and withdrawn. I missed "The Offenders" in this way, and "His

Wife's Family," and just caught the last act of "Agnes."

Figures don't lie—unless they're show girls' figures. There were fifteen productions in thirty days, of which number five were musical comedies. Seven of the ten dramatic offerings were complete failures, and will not be playing on Broadway when your eye falls upon this line. Toward the end of October, in the very thick of the season, three important theaters were closed. There was no conspicuous success, and even the failures were not interesting. Ordinarily, you run a better chance of witnessing a good play if you pick failures than if you pick successes—witness "The Silver Box" and "The Good Hope"—but the failures last month were merely tiresome. The race is not always to the swift. In October it was to the very, very slow.

"SAMSON" came nearest to being a real hit, despite the grilling it got from a majority of the critics. This play, acted by William Gillette at the Criterion, was written by Henri Bernstein, author of "The Thief," and originally presented with some success in Paris. It cannot truthfully be said to compare with "The Thief," lacking the qualities of novelty and searching exposition of character, but it is impressive and has a great deal of brute force. To condemn the piece utterly because of its faults is like condemning Notre Dame because of its gargoyles.

The worst fault of M. Bernstein's new work is its exceeding triteness. The eternal triangle of husband, wife and lover probably is the oldest thing in the drama, and, of a surety, the next oldest

is the woman whose mother sold her, and who married with the understanding that her purchaser was not to expect love from her. Somewhere in the real world there may be a man who is ass enough to wed under this condition, but, if there is, he deserves what he gets, and trading stamps to boot. No one in "Samson" receives any real sympathy from the audience—not the former dock laborer who white-slave-traffics himself into matrimony, nor the wife who doesn't even respect the implied obligation of fidelity, nor the father, mother and brother who are parties to the sale.

The saving strength of the play, and its single element of originality, is the duel fought between husband and lover. Jerome Le Govain has attempted to wrong Maurice Brachard, whom M. Bernstein puts forward as Samson. Le Govain is a practiced bully, an expert in the use of the sword and the pistol. Brachard is not, never until recently having had any honor to defend. So he chooses his own weapon, as, indeed, he has the right to do—the only weapon which he knows how to use—Money. It is an idea that ought to have come to an American! And with money he secures his revenge, even though, like Samson, he pulls down the temple about his own head, ruining himself along with his enemy.

The scene in which Brachard detains Le Govain in a room at the Hotel Ritz while his stocks are tumbling is exciting, thrilling, intense, no matter what the critics said of it. You will feel well repaid for your evening when you have witnessed that scene. And you will have need so to feel, for the act that follows is milk and water, pap and baby food. The wife, Anne-Marie, who was so ready to run away with the first-comer, is seized with a sudden attack of honor. She will stay with Brachard because he is penniless. Then, suddenly, scruple turns to love. Anne-Marie, having been whitewashed by every process known to calciminer and dramatist, throws herself into the arms of her husband. And we are expected to call this a "happy ending."

How much finer, and daring, and more original, if Anne-Marie had stuck to her guns and Brachard to his gun-metal, which in this case was gold! He never could be at one with Anne-Marie, never could forget her betrayal, never could belong to her set. "In six months," Anne-Marie's brother, Max, had said of him, "he'll own the Eiffel Tower." (Did Anne-Marie hear the remark? Is *that* why she went back?) I would have wished to see the wife, consistent to the end, leaving Brachard; the husband evidencing his realization of her kindness in so doing, and then, free of the drag-weight, sitting down with his broker to plan for the future, for the ownership of the Eiffel Tower, as the curtain fell.

That would have been the true "happy ending." I say it with one hand on my heart and one eye on the box office. True, Brachard would have lost Anne-Marie, whom no sane man could have wanted, but he would have been back on the road to fortune. "And the average American," as someone said when Curtis Jadwin gained domestic bliss through financial disaster in "The Pit," "would rather lose a whole harem of wives than nine dollars."

I thought the play excellently performed. Mr. Gillette's habit of reserve is a little too strong for him in the big act, which, in consequence, does not have all the tension possible, but he is admirable in what precedes and follows. Arthur Byron, one of our very best leading men, gives a portrait of Le Govain that is less French than universal. Frederic de Belleville as the mollusc of a father; Marie Wainwright as the mother; and Pauline Frederick as the cast-off mistress of Le Govain, are wholly admirable. Indeed, Miss Frederick, judged by the eyes, is so admirable, so good to look upon, that she costs the play verisimilitude. Nobody would ever cast off Pauline Frederick. It simply couldn't be done. I don't know whether to blame the rôle or the actress for the unfavorable impression made by Constance Collier, so I'll be generous, and say that Anne-

Marie is an exceedingly bad part. Also a bad party! I wish Brachard joy of her.

THOMAS WISE, co-star of "A Gentleman from Mississippi," at the Bijou, told me the other night how accident gave him the most delightfully amusing moment in that play, which he wrote in collaboration with Harrison Rhodes.

At the end of the third act William H. Langdon, junior Senator from Mississippi, is in a hole. He must either countenance a barefaced piece of dishonesty or seem implicated in it. He engages to escape both horns of the dilemma and to make things hot for the villains unless they come to his office to make terms at twelve-thirty the next afternoon. "The scene would be much stronger," said William A. Brady, when it was read to him, "if the audience knew what measures Langdon proposed to take. What is he going to do in the fourth act?"

Mr. Wise replied, "I'm damned if I know!"

"Bully!" exclaimed Mr. Brady. "Let him say that!"

So, in "A Gentleman from Mississippi," when the audience has thrilled at Langdon's declaration of war against the grafters, at his promise to ruin them if they do not surrender on schedule time, the Senator's young secretary, left alone with him, inquires: "What are you going to do at twelve-thirty tomorrow?" Langdon makes the same answer that Mr. Wise gave Mr. Brady, and the curtain falls.

This humorous conclusion of a stirring situation typifies the amiable irresponsibility of the new bill at the Bijou. "A Gentleman from Mississippi" has no lofty purpose; it was not written with a muck-rake. That portion of the piece which deals with dishonesty in Congress is not very serious, and I doubt if it was meant to be taken seriously. There is little love story in the play, and that little almost unnecessary. "A Gentleman from Mississippi" is simply brisk, crisp comedy, which comes nearer to the style and

standard of "A Texas Steer" than has any other play of recent years.

It is interesting to note that the truest and most convincing sentiment that gets over the footlights at the Bijou is not the romance of man and woman, but the affection which the elderly Mississippian feels for his young secretary, "Bud" Haines. The theme of friendship between men has been strangely neglected by dramatists; excepting only long tested devotion of husband and wife, nothing in human experience is so fine or so appealing.

"Sir," says Haines to his new employer, "I'll try to make you a good secretary."

"Bud," replies Langdon, "I'll try to make you a good Senator."

And each is faithful to his promise. A clique, headed by Langdon's own son and his older daughter, try to convince the statesman that "Bud" is using him for personal ends, but "Bud," aided by the younger Miss Langdon, who is his partner in the little love story already mentioned, turns the tables, shows the Senator that his own family has invested in land which the Government is expected to use as a naval base, and, directly after that "I'm damned if I know," leads the way to defeating the ends of graft, while still keeping the Senator's skirts clean and enabling him to place the naval base where it will do the most good.

Mr. Wise's Langdon and Douglas Fairbanks's "Bud" are characteristic performances, the one ponderous, good-humored; the other sprightly, flippant; both unctuous and agreeable. Frederick Bock presents a pathetic figure of a broken-down colonel, who drops into the International (Arlington?) for paper on which to write his daughter, so that she may believe her father is stopping at a good hotel. Creditable work is done by Stanhope Wheatcroft as young Langdon, and by Ernest Baxter as a dishonest Congressman, the remainder of the cast being adequate, if not individually conspicuous for merit. The action of the comedy is in Washington, where one enthusiastic Southerner, just back from Manhattan,

describes New York as "a promising town—the Vicksburg of the North."

WHY in the name of common sense, that most uncommon of the virtues, do newspaper critics persist in contemptuous treatment of melodrama? "Such and such a play is a melodrama," they say, as though that settled the question of its merit. Yet good, plausible melodrama is pretty hard stuff to write; it has monopolized the attention of scores of our biggest authors—Victorien Sardou, Henry Arthur Jones, Dion Boucicault among others. Melodrama is drawing-room drama in its shirt sleeves, and almost every other kind of drama that induces one to sit up and take notice.

All this *à propos* of "Pierre of the Plains," which is now on the road, but which stopped at the Hudson Theater long enough to reveal itself as a particularly absorbing play. Edgar Selwyn adapted the first two acts of the piece from one of the short stories contained in Sir Gilbert Parker's "Pierre and His People"; the last two acts are an original extension of the consequences of this story. The tale is an ingenious one, in which Jen Galbraith, whose brother Val, having committed murder, is a fugitive from justice, creeps out in the night and rides to the headquarters of the Mounted Police with the sealed order for that brother's arrest. Jen's sweetheart, Sergeant Tom Redding, was entrusted with these papers, but, stopping to see Jen, is drugged by her father and Pierre. The girl's act is prompted by a desire to save her lover, but, of course, unknowingly she starts out the authorities after Val. The narrative is stirringly worked out, having a splendid legitimate climax in Jen's discovery of what she has done, and a trick climax in a remarkable fall of thirty feet, which ends the career of the villain. Paul Dickey's method of preparing for this tumble was to take it in an ordinary suit of clothes one day at rehearsal. The spots on his body that turned black and blue were the places to be padded in the costume which he wore afterward.

Mr. Selwyn is most engaging in the title rôle of the new play, and his supporting company is of uniform excellence. Elsie Ferguson, who used to be a chorus girl, does capital work in the part of Jen. This is the year of the chorus girl. Elsie Ferguson in "Pierre of the Plains," and Pauline Frederick in "Samson"! Obviously, the way to be a good actress is to spend a couple of seasons tracing aerial designs with the toe of one's right boot. If Mrs. Leslie Carter had only started life as a chorus girl!

I SHOULD like very much to see a review of "The Man Who Stood Still" written by Jules Eckert Goodman, who wrote the play in which Louis Mann is appearing at the Circle. Mr. Goodman used to be the keenest of our magazine critics, and, seeing his own drama from "the front," he couldn't fail to realize the failure of what he set out to do.

The obvious intention of "The Man Who Stood Still" was to show the inevitable ruin of a kindly, tender, good-natured loiterer in the hustle and bustle of a land "where whatever succeeds must be right, and whatever fails must be wrong." "I sing the song of the man who fails," wrote the late Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Mr. Goodman tried to sing the song, too, but got off the key. The theme of the old against the new, the aged against the young and strong, is a big one—it is the theme which Ibsen handled abortively in "The Master Builder." Only once in the whole course of the performance at the Circle does Mr. Goodman make clear his point. The rest of the time he goes astray after a trite and unpleasant story about a girl who is seduced and whose father will not forgive her. This story was milked dry in "Hazel Kirke," and Mr. Goodman, sacrificing the power lying in his basic idea, brings about only noise and chaos, stale tricks and cheap melodrama.

The play is badly acted and wretchedly stage-managed. Louis Mann, who is presented as the star of the occasion, shows a glimmer of the dramatic ability which he undoubtedly possesses, and

which some day will break into flame, but his performance lacks definition and repression. His support is a broken reed. Whoever knows Mr. Goodman and Mr. Mann must be sorry that so much ambition and industry have come to nothing in "The Man Who Stood Still."

ONCE upon a time I attended a dinner to a celebrated playwright, at which John Corbin spoke at great length and with awe-compelling erudition on "The Art of the Theater." When he had finished, Sam H. Harris, partner of George Cohan, whispered to his neighbor: "The son-of-a-gun! Now I know why he didn't like 'Little Johnny Jones'!"

After witnessing "Mater," which hesitated for a while at the Savoy, I know why Percy Mackaye never wrote a successful play. And the reason is the same. Mr. Mackaye is the Johnny Bostonbeans of the drama. He suffers from a chronic case of highbrowism, for which the only cures are death and a sense of humor. "Mater," with its exquisite English, its genuine poetry of dialogue, had not a single point of contact with human nature. It was a work for the library, not for the stage.

When will our highbrows learn that it is not clever to be dull? J. M. Barrie probably is as learned as Mr. Mackaye, yet consider the simplicity, the whimsicality, the tender charm of his "Alice Sit-by-the-Fire." The Lady Who Goes to the Theater with Me is still talking about the eye-moistening little scenes between mother and daughter in that comedy. "Mater" is about mother love—a love so strong that the mother encourages the advances of a dishonest politician so that her boy's political career may not be nipped in the bud—and yet one's Adam's apple never moved from its accustomed place. Mr. Mackaye not only wasn't able to command sympathy; he actually repelled it. When aggressively, annoyingly righteous Michael Dean observed to his devoted parent, "Then you lied to me!" a tough little boy beside me commented, "Chee! I wouldn't talk dat way to

me mudder." The tough little boy wasn't a highbrow, but, somehow, I agreed with him.

Mr. Mackaye says that "the best of love is laughter," and his play is emphatically the sort of play you would expect from a man who feels that way about it. "Mater" is past and gone now, and really not worth the space I've given it, except for the fact that it points a moral.

I honor Isabel Irving for her willingness to appear as the mother of a grown son. True, she elected to be a very—oh, quite an impossibly!—young mother, and always seemed to be playing at maternity, but still the son was in evidence. The only other woman star I know in America willing to be a mother in public is Ethel Barrymore, and I suspect her of consenting only because she knows she can't look the part. Most of our actresses begin to be very coy at thirty. By the time they have given up pulling out gray hairs they want to play belles with whom every man in the cast is madly in love and whose beauty is described for fifteen minutes before their first entrance.

THE Majestic has housed two productions since "Father and Son" concluded its run—perhaps, I should say its dash—of three consecutive nights. Nance O'Neil, a singularly wooden and old-fashioned actress, tarried there a while with "Agnes," and then Jessie Bonstelle sought an answer to "The Great Question." The answer, as Bert Williams used to remark, "was N-O-E—NO!"

Neither play need be discussed. "Agnes," written by Mrs. Sydney Drew, under the pen name of George Cameron, had an interesting theme, clumsily worked out. The drama, however, was much better than the acting, and, in other hands, might have had some measure of success. Its story concerned a woman who, wedded under the original and highly probable conditions governing the marriage in "Samson," lost her husband in a shipwreck. She had repaired the loss with another husband, when Number One turned

up, suffering from aphasia, unable to recall his past. Number Two was a doctor, and, ignorant of the identity of Number One, undertook an operation to restore his memory. Just as the wife, dreading the consequences of this restoration, was about to run away, Number One died. "My first failure!" exclaimed Number Two, as the curtain fell.

"The Great Question" proved to be an actor-made play, which is to say a play of expedients, improbabilities and creaking machinery, built around the subject which inspired "Pudd'nhead Wilson." Alicia Savernex—sounds like program English for Rosie O'Brien, doesn't it?—had negro blood, and a couple of unscrupulous villains held the secret over the head of her father to influence his vote on a land grab. The piece was utterly impossible from every viewpoint. "The Great Question" will always be how stuff like this finds its way to the stage.

I WAS looking at the man on the extreme left of the orchestra, and wondering if, after all, playing a bass viol wasn't a good deal like running an elevator, when I first saw it. I shivered, sat up, clutched the arms of my seat and made a more minute inspection. At this moment Maxine Elliott turned away, and I was left in hideous suspense. Could it really have been a— Oh, no; of course not! Spots on the sun, profanity carved in the obelisk, cracks across the face of Raphael's Madonna, but surely . . .

If the impression of that instant was correct, I blame Rachel Crothers, for a play as silly and conventional as "Myself—Bettina," in which Miss Elliott appeared at Daly's, might spoil the brow of the Greek Slave. Miss Crothers made her reputation by writing comedies that were unimportant but true; "Myself—Bettina" belongs to the class of important *if* true. The "small town in New England" which she pictures, like Wordsworth's light, "never was on sea or land," and her people stepped out of story books in Sunday-school libraries.

"Myself—Bettina" is "Magda"; a very catty, selfish, self-assertive Magda. I suppose Miss Crothers's idea was to disclose the regeneration of the girl, but her purpose, like Mr. Goodman's, never got over the footlights. It was lost in a tumble of incident, and—heaven help us!—another story of seduced girlhood. Bettina has been studying music in Paris, and returns to this impossible "small town" with the determination to show her broad-mindedness. She shows it principally by arranging to perform "Salome" in a church, which exhibition most of us would simply call bad taste. Then she finds that her half-sister has been ruined by a young New Englander with an old English accent, and—

And displays her real broad-mindedness?

Not a bit of it. She goes at little sister like a fury, with all the ancient, stale, nasty notions about a mistake of this kind, and it is the narrow-minded clergyman who talks redemption and common sense. This unpleasant scene begins with two recitals of shame, and ends in a religious discussion. "Myself—Bettina," all in all, is dreadfully dull and tiresome, even Miss Elliott's much-advertised appearance in the Salome costume, like her last year's much-advertised appearance in a bathing suit, leading only to disappointment. Despite the vicarious immodesty of the press agent, Miss Elliott's lower limbs are still clothed in mystery and long skirts.

But that momentary impression! Perhaps a fleeting shadow deceived me! Do you suppose it really could have been a wrinkle—

If you really want to be a child again—I don't; but I know oodles of people who do—drop into the New Amsterdam Theater and see "Little Nemo." Whether you long for juvenility or not, you'll enjoy this big frolic, this delightfully aimless orgy of nonsense. When the performance is half over you will have forgotten what happened in the first quarter of it, and you'll be so interested in what is happening and

about to happen that you won't care to remember it.

Of course, you know that Little Nemo went to sleep in the *Sunday Herald*. He woke up again in a libretto by Harry B. Smith, with music by Victor Herbert, and scenery, costumes, properties, drums, shoes, wigs, fireworks and electrical effects by almost everybody in New York. You see him—I mean Nemo—in the playground of a city park, in the Land of St. Valentine, where he witnesses "The March of the Valentines"; on the Island of Table d'Hôte, where he brings a regiment of wooden soldiers to life; in the Palace of Patriotism, where there is a marvelous pyrotechnic display; on the deck of a battleship and, finally, in Slumberland. Nemo misses the weather factory in Cloudland, and a most charming conception, the dance of the raindrops. There are eleven scenes in this extravaganza, each of them wonderfully beautiful and each of them an excuse for comedy or music or dancing of the liveliest sort.

Master Gabriel, a Lilliputian of real ability, is Little Nemo, and Joseph Cawthorn, Harry Kelly and Billy B. Van are his side-splitting associates. These three meet in a forest and discuss their hunting exploits. One of them has put a bullet in a bird seventeen thousand feet in the air. "The bird fell to the ground—dead. How's that for a shot?"

"Not so much," is the reply. "The fall would have killed him, anyway."

Mr. Van has captured a Mondomaniac, "a peculiar animal with bushy eyebrows, that spins a web the same as a zebra." Mr. Kelly tops that. He once shot a Peninsula, "the only bird that lays a square egg." Mr. Cawthorn admits the bagging of a Wiffenpoof. "The way to kill a Wiffenpoof is to bore a hole in a lake, and lay a piece of cheese on the edge of it. The Wiffenpoof comes to the surface, eats the cheese, and swells up so that he can't get back through the hole. Then you sit and laugh at him until he dies of mortification."

"Little Nemo" is made up of this kind

of foolishness, and of fairly good melodies, and of beautiful stage pictures. If your brain throbs with much thinking, and the wheels won't stop going round, don't stay up all night in the effort to forget. Go and see "Little Nemo." It's dissipation without a headache.

"THE AMERICAN IDEA," which is advertised as a "violation of the speed limit," is also a defiance of the campaign against noise. Racket and hustle take the place of wit and music, the result being confusion, chaos and utter stupidity. Whatever may be said of George M. Cohan's peculiar style of entertainment, he has never before produced a play so nearly devoid of bright lines, whistleable melodies and originality.

Except for these omissions, "The American Idea" is cast in the familiar mold. Two "American" fathers want their daughters to marry noblemen, and are deceived, first by a hotel porter disguised as a count, and then by their own sons in similar disguise. There is much running about the stage, much loud talk, and one amusing character, The Mysterious Stranger, whose descriptions of himself are a variation of the conceit worked out by Jerome Sykes as Foxy Quiller. At the end of the second act the Stars and Stripes come to the rescue wrapped about the persons of two or three dozen show women and "broilers." I suppose I lack patriotic spirit, but I never could understand how the American flag is dignified by becoming merely a drapery for a lot of chorus girls.

George Beban is in "The American Idea," and so are Robert L. Dailey, Walter Le Roy, Gilbert Gregory, Hugh Mack, Trixie Friganza and Stella Hammerstein, whose principal occupation seems to be running away from people who are about to sing. The show is at the New York Theater.

LOUIS MANN's and Clara Lipman's old vehicle, "The Girl in the Barracks," has been scrubbed, overhauled, fitted with music and rechristened "Mlle.

Mischief" for the use of Lulu Glaser. The piece, which is on view at the Lyric, makes a mighty good evening's entertainment, and gives Miss Glaser an opportunity of appearing to better advantage than she has done since the days of "Dolly Varden."

You will remember that "The Girl in the Barracks" was a damsel who essayed to win a bet by disguising herself as a soldier and remaining for twenty-four hours in military quarters at Fremstadt. This story still obtains, and makes possible a number of uproariously comic situations. Then, too, as I have already said, Miss Glaser is very charming in her boy's clothes, and very droll in anything. The music composed for the performance by Carl M. Ziehrer is more than ordinarily untuneful, but nobody minds, because the soloists are invariably backed by a chorus of the prettiest girls that ever caused a dime to tinkle down the slot of an opera-glass box.

The American adaptation of Kraatz and Von Sterk is by Sydney Rosenfeld, and, barring always "The Three Twins," the entertainment is the best thing of its kind the season has brought forth in New York.

ANOTHER made-over play is Harry B. Smith's "The Second Fiddle," which has been metamorphosed into "The Golden Butterfly" and is being presented by Grace Van Studdiford at the Broadway. In this case it is a score by Reginald de Koven that saves the day, the piece having a dozen lilting melodies, and one song, "Don't Forget Me," that Miss Van Studdiford sings, if not into immortality, at least into popularity and profit to the music publishers.

There isn't much humor in "The Golden Butterfly," which clings as closely to comic opera traditions as the star's tights do to her shapely legs. Louis Harrison has stolen Walter

Percival's opera, which is to be produced in Budapest. In order that Miss Van Studdiford may have the principal rôle, Mr. Percival entices away Gene Luneska. Thereupon Miss Van Studdiford makes a prodigious hit, and Mr. Percival comes to his own as composer of the successful work. The funniest thing in the entertainment is the idea of a theater green room given in the second act. However, as Mr. de Koven has furnished some excellent music to sing, and as Miss Van Studdiford knows how to sing it, the performance is worth while.

THE difference between a musical comedy and a comic opera is that a musical comedy is sometimes funny.

"Marcelle," at the Casino, is comic opera. And "Marcelle" is pleasant, tuneful, pretty and quite laudable, but never funny. That is, hardly ever. Joseph Cawthorn, in "The Fortune Teller," used to relate a joke around which he proposed to write a comic opera, and there is one laughable line in "Marcelle." It is:

"Drinking is the king of indoor sports."

For the rest, there are many merry, merry villagers, and there are Jess Dandy and Herbert Cawthorne, who are sadder than Francis Wilson at his comicallest. Also a smile with a boy named Lawrence Wheat around it, and Elsa Ryan singing to someone, as always, from a bench. Louise Gunning, the star, is beautiful to look at, and her sweet voice is heard to advantage in "Cupid—Sly Little Rascal" and "The Message of the Red, Red Rose."

Altogether, the piece affords a nice way of spending a quiet evening, but if "Marcelle" plucked the laurels from the brow of "The Merry Widow," as the bill boards say she did, it must have been when "The Merry Widow" wasn't looking.

WHO says America has no leisure class? How about the waiter to whom you give a rush order?

OYEZ! OYEZ! ALL YE WHO READ BOOKS

By H. L. MENCKEN

IN the practice of the gentlemanly art of literary criticism it is well to be careful about calling names. One's first impulse, on coming to the end of many an elegantly bound romance, is to write, "This author is an ass," and let it go at that, but the laws of etiquette and libel make necessary a far more subtle and circuitous conveyance of the idea. This, I suppose, explains the occasional verbosity of the current reviews. They are long and indirect, not because the average journeyman critic lacks the science of terse utterance, but because he is reluctant to employ it.

Whether his desire be to denounce without mercy or to praise without stint, the same fear of the short, unequivocal word hangs over him like a pall. On the one hand, a host of terms that seem peculiarly appropriate and apposite in writing of certain current novels and their authors—such as "shoemaker," "mutt," "fake," "bunk," "lunatic" and "garbage," for example—are barred from his lexicon; and on the other hand he must be wary and chary of the word "genius." Call any living writer a genius, and straightway Andrew Lang sets up a laugh, just as everyone else in the world would laugh if the term were ever applied to Andrew himself.

"A genius?" he cackles. "Go to! Who ever heard of a genius in a stove-pipe hat? The novelists of today may be men of talent (never having read their books, I can't be certain about that), but there are no geniuses among them. Of that clan, Sir Walter was the last!"

And so Andrew fills his column in the London *Morning Post* (that chaste journal whose chief item of news, each morning, is: "Sarah, the wife of Sir William Smith, Bart., of a son") and earns his frugal haggis.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding, despite and in the face of which, as the barristers say, I cling to the notion that more than one man of genius is engaged in literary endeavor today. As exhibit number one, I offer Dr. Samuel Langhorne Clemens, author of "Huckleberry Finn," the greatest novel yet written by an American. (Witnesses: Sir Walter Besant, *et al.*) As exhibit number two, I offer the man who wrote "A Wife Without a Smile"; as number three, the author of "Heimat"; as number four, George B. Shaw, of Ireland; as number five, Gerhart Hauptmann; as number six—but I had better jump ahead to fifteenthly, and so come, without further delay, to the gentleman whose praises I presume to sing today. His name is Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, and his latest book is "THE POINT OF HONOR." (*McClure*, \$1.50.)

Mr. Korzeniowski is a Pole by birth, though at present resident in England, and he was well on toward his majority before he learned to speak the English language. Mr. Korzeniowski is a mariner by trade—"Master in the Merchant Service," as "Who's Who" puts it—and he was thirty-eight years old, with hands gnarled by hard work and a skin roughened by the sea, before it occurred to him to write. It thus appears that his nomination as a man of genius in the literary way in-

volves a triple violation of the league rules, for he is still very much alive, and his log-book shows that he neither devoured "Paradise Lost" and "The Spectator" at six nor composed elegies at nine. Instead of acquiring the art of writing English in his early nonage, unconsciously and by osmosis, as a Georgian acquires his Democracy, Mr. Korzeniowski tackled it as a grown man. Instead of being born with a complete and unerring knowledge of men and their minds, as every union genius should be, he gathered his store of facts painfully and slowly, by sailing up and down the Seven Seas in sailing ships and steam cargo tanks, observing a multitude of men of many diverse races, in many a godless port, at their love-making, their swindling, their adventuring and their dying.

It was in 1894 that he began to write, and in order that his public might not mistake him for a Socialist or a pianoplayer, he dropped his Slav patronymic and subscribed himself Joseph Conrad. Since then he has written thirteen books, including two in collaboration with F. M. Hueffer. The two half-Hueffer volumes rise to no greater heights than those scaled often and easily by Henry James and William Dean Howells, but in the eleven which belong to Conrad alone there are tales which come dangerously near being unique in English literature. Among them are the stories called "Youth," "Falk," "Heart of Darkness," "Typhoon" and "Nostromo"—three of magazine length, one a novelette and one a romance of more than six hundred pages. I have read these things over and over again, and with each reading has come a more and more bewildering sense of their perfect form, their gorgeous color, their sheer artistry. If there is a better story in the world today than "Youth," old or new, grave or gay, in any living or dead language, I will cheerfully undertake the study of that language on receipt of the news, no matter how numerous its cases. And if there is any other story teller on earth today who thinks that he could

have written "Youth"—or "Heart of Darkness" or "Falk"—well, I shall be glad to listen to him, but he will have to be powerfully eloquent to get my money.

"THE POINT OF HONOR" is not one of the best of Conrad's stories, and there may be some ground for arguing that it is not a work of genius at all, but all the same it contains more than one page that only a master hand could write. Underlying it lies the idea that runs from Conrad's first page to his last—the idea of the fortuitousness, the vagueness, the meaninglessness of circumstance and life. We may describe an event, but we can never hope to explain it; the mystery of birth, the fact of death, the infinite chains of causation which lead a man to choose this woman for his wife and that color for his necktie; which make him a fat man in an alpaca coat poring over a ledger in a stuffy office, or a thin man in a tattered tennis coat, fighting a rhinoceros in some African mudhole—all of these are alike incomprehensible. Falk risks his life's happiness trying to frame an explanation, and MM. Feraud and D'Hubert, of "THE POINT OF HONOR," grow old seeking one.

Feraud and D'Hubert are officers of the Grande Armée, and as the story opens they are in garrison at Strasbourg. D'Hubert is a Northerner—tall, blond, impassive. Feraud is from Gascony—black, daring, extravagant in his passions. One day it falls to D'Hubert's lot to seek out Feraud and demand his presence at headquarters, to answer to some small complaint against him. Feraud, torn from the side of a hospitable hostess, rages riotously and denounces the general for an inhuman martinet. But in this tirade there is no satisfaction, for the general is safely remote and unheeding. So Feraud turns his batteries of abuse upon the stolid D'Hubert.

At first D'Hubert laughs and then he wonders. Is it only Feraud's excuse of indignation—or is he, perhaps, a lunatic? Suddenly Feraud challenges, and in a moment swords are out and

blood is flowing. D'Hubert, standing over the prostrate Feraud, racks his brains to discover what it is all about. Why have they fought? What made them enemies? How will the thing be explained to the general—and the army? Who will believe his account of it?

And there we have our story. The explanation, in point of fact, is never forthcoming, for the simple reason that it doesn't exist. Feraud and D'Hubert fight and fight again, afoot and on horseback, with swords, sabers and pistols, in all the countries of Europe, as lieutenants, again as captains, again as colonels, and in the end as retired brigadiers of the broken and scattered army. A dozen fantastic legends spring up to account for their sanguinary feud. Feraud, called upon to explain it, invents a story more preposterous than any of the others. D'Hubert, pressed to tell, says vaguely but truthfully that it is something that cannot be told. And thus, in the end, they pass out of sight—foemen still, carrying on to the grave their ferocious and incomprehensible enmity.

The hand of Conrad is visible in the structure of this uncommon tale, and it is even more apparent in the telling of it. Believe me, there is art in this story—the art of one of the most remarkable romancers our English tongue has known—whose worst story makes the best of many another man seem puny.

Two books of philosophy come next on the list. The first is "THE MAKING OF PERSONALITY," by Bliss Carman (*Page*, \$1.50), and the second is "FIRST AND LAST THINGS," by H. G. Wells (*Putnam's*, \$1.50). The philosophy laid down by Mr. Carman may be reduced to the proposition that a healthy, graceful body makes a contented mind. The astute reader will observe that this proposition is nothing more or less than a clear-cut and direct reversal of the fundamental thesis of Christian Science, but if it is presumed, therefore, that Mr. Carman is a materialist, the presumption will conflict with a multi-

tude of facts. In truth, his view of human problems is essentially that of the mystic and poet, and despite his ready acceptance of the indubitable maxim that the influence of the liver upon the mind is ever greater than the influence of the mind upon the liver, it is apparent that his acquaintance with physiological psychology is none too profound.

It would take a lot of ink and much labor to rescue Mr. Carman from his maze. In the short space available here I can only warn him against a too genial view of human progress. He seems to think that a sort of calm, optimistic, abstracted contentment, universally diffused, is its object and goal. Nothing could be more fallacious, for it is just this sort of contentment, born of faith and hope, that is today, always has been and ever will be, the worst of all foes that true progress faces. In our weary struggle up from the ape we have need, not of soothing, but of blood and iron. Mr. Carman, preaching his gentleman's gospel, sounds the praises of dancing, but I rather suspect that the men who do the world's work have long since discovered that swearing is far more useful.

It is needless to say that Mr. Carman writes with charm and grace. His prose, like his poetry, has music in it, and one is very apt to succumb to its sensuous manner and so accept too easily its debatable matter. The passages in praise of dancing are so well done, indeed, that I, for one, should not be surprised at news that Miss Isadora Duncan had translated them into her subtle language of mobile curves and Sapphic pigeon-wings.

Mr. Wells's book comes upon the heels of a cablegram announcing his withdrawal from the Fabian Society, and from the book one may deduce an explanation of the withdrawal. Here, in brief, we have the private and personal confession of faith of a Socialist whose ardor has begun to cool. In theory Mr. Wells may still believe in human brotherhood, but in practice he puts it

very far in the future. Like all other dreamers, when the facts of life begin to press upon him he constructs a number of fine quibbles and subterfuges to ease the agony of his soul. In the face of an obtuse populace what is the Socialist of today to do? Here is Mr. Wells's answer:

"Do not steal. Do not defraud. Do not aspire to the accumulation of tainted millions. But guard your dollars well and try to get as many of them as you can. Look upon your bank account, not as your private property, but as part of the public funds, to be taken over by the State at the Socialist millennium. Meanwhile enjoy yourself. If the millennium never comes—well, you have done your best."

I am not quoting Mr. Wells literally, but this seems to me to be a fair interpretation of his remarks on pages 160 and 161 of his book.

Luckily, he mentions Socialism very seldom in the course of his three hundred or more pages, and when he is off the subject his philosophy is most reasonable and interesting. If more men of his originality and ability could be induced to lay bare their thoughts in this manner, we would soon accumulate a literature of real philosophy.

"Who says the essay is dead?" With this sentence every third review of a new book by Miss Agnes Repplier begins. It has become a sort of literary *Kyrie eleison*—eternally introductory and perpetually apposite. The latest Repplier book, "A HAPPY HALF-CENTURY" (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.10), calls it up again, for here we have essays that the old masters of the craft might have envied.

The "half-century" of the title refers to no span in Miss Repplier's own existence, but to the fifty years between 1775 and 1825. During this pallid time all the modern virtues were invented and all the ancient ones were reenacted. The passion of love, frozen in the cold blasts of propriety, was turned into "affection" and "esteem"; appetites gave way to "principles," women became "females," legs became

"limbs," and the British "lady novelist," new born and yet a nine days' wonder, evolved for all time the magnificent moral and physiological maxim that there is a vacuum below the human diaphragm.

This age is of vast interest to all of us today, for the reason that we are still in process of leaving it. Hannah More, alas! has passed to her reward, but we yet have our Ella Wheeler Wilcox to counsel us. Gone are the cardboard ornaments and herbariums of 1810, but in their room are the upright pianos, Brussels carpets and ash receivers made of cigar bands of today. Forgotten, perhaps, are the fair authors of "The Elements of Morality" and "Letters on the Improvement of the Mind," but Anthony Comstock, Governor Hughes and the Reverend Wilbur F. Crafts are yet alive and kicking. And so it is a task at once agreeable and edifying to read Miss Repplier's charming essays.

The obvious comparison with "The Four Georges" will not down. In "A HAPPY HALF-CENTURY" you will find the same bitter honesty and the same bitter wit, not to mention the same happy faculty for turning dead names into living beings. There is, too, some flavor of Thackeray's genial worldliness, of his jovial sacrilege, of his toleration and his broad and human philosophy. Reading these delightful dissertations one rounds up, now and then, with a start—and stands aghast before the fact that they were written by a maiden lady in Philadelphia.

The newspaper reviewers, I fear, have been rather unjust to young Mr. Joseph Medill Patterson, author of "A LITTLE BROTHER OF THE RICH" (*Reilly-Britton*, \$1.50). Several years ago I read a brief composition by this gentleman, entitled "What Is Money?" and have since preserved it in my literary archives as an example of thoroughly expressive and excellent English. Therefore it gave me disquiet to learn (via the reviewers aforesaid) that his book was a flaming Socialist harangue with incidental indecencies, for Socialism makes

hard reading, and even indecencies can do little to relieve its gloom.

Happily, the book itself gives the lie to these orthodox and virtuous critics. The author is in deadly earnest, and more than once one gets the impression that his own story horrifies him, but in no place does he preach, and nowhere is his frankness disgusting. He is trying to tell the story of a dozen worthless men and a dozen worse women, and he does it in a straightforward, ingenuous manner, without too great a stretching of probability and without a too finicky restraint. If it be urged that his people are not typical of New York society, it may be answered quite justly that he makes no such claim for them. All he seeks to show is that there are men in New York—he does not say how many—who divide their time between gambling for money and spending their winnings on women, and women who judge each new man by the amount of money he has to spend. If you doubt that this is true, go ask some taxicab chauffeur or headwaiter along Broadway.

Mr. Patterson's purpose, of course, is to demonstrate the demoralizing influence of money. To this thesis two objections may be offered, the first being that it is admitted by all, and so needs no demonstration, and the second being that it is not true. In his ready acceptance of its verity lies the proof of his Socialistic tendencies, for Socialism, when all is said and done, is nothing more than the theory that the slave is always more virtuous than his master. In other words, the Socialists hold that the slave's yearning to rise is, in some mysterious and recondite way, more pleasing to a just God than the master's yearning to stay up, and that this superiority in yearning breeds a general superiority in all other ways. Two or three years of experience as a police reporter would convince any intelligent Socialist that all this is foolishness. As a matter of fact, the average poor man is just as covetous, just as bestial, just as lecherous and just as hypocritical as the average millionaire. The only difference between them is that the poor

man beats his wife and belongs to a lodge.

Mr. Patterson's earnestness often makes his writing too fluent and too easy, and now and then the rank miasma of a Methodist conscience seems to hang over his pages, but he is far from a bungler. In more than one scene, indeed, he reveals surprising skill.

"THE MAN WHO ENDED WAR," by Hollis Godfrey (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), is a tale of scientific marvels à la Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne. The mysterious hero, desiring to make war impossible, declares a world-war of his own upon all battleships. He begins by destroying one and ends with two whole fleets. The trick is done, it would seem, with some sort of wireless vitriol, which has the power of reducing nickel steel to empty gas. Mr. Godfrey's characters are even more wooden than Verne's, and his style is even more artificial than Poe's. The best way to enjoy his book is to lend it to some friend, and then have him tell you the story. It is told so badly by the author that in reading it you are apt to miss its thrills.

At the very opposite pole is "THE RIGHT MAN," by Brian Hooker (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.25). Here we have a fantastic, impossible story, told with such resource and spirit that it seems almost true. An American girl with amber hair, warm brown skin and indolent lips (I am quoting the author) sets out for Europe, with her fiancé (a millionaire) to bear her company, and her aunt to keep her conscience. On the ship she meets an American fiddler and at Boulogne-sur-Mer he drags her ashore and marries her. The tale of his cyclonic wooing is an excellent one, with fiddling and fisticuffs hopelessly intermingled, and Mr. Hooker does full justice to it. On one page, true enough, he says that his heroine "was somehow ultimate," and you begin to grow alarmed, but this henry-jacobin mood is but a passing madness, and a few pages further on he is down to earth again.

Two books by Miss Anne Warner reveal a not inconsiderable talent, but one gets from them, somehow, that Miss Warner would be benefited if publishers were less eager to print her compositions. One of them, "THE PANTHER" (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.25), is a natural child of Kipling's "They." That is to say, it is a rather far-fetched parable, whose precise meaning is in doubt. My first objection to this book lies in the suspicion that its meaning, on being revealed, will add nothing to the sum of human knowledge. My second objection lies in the fact that the work is written in a style that must more than once induce snickers in any human being more than eighteen inches in waist-diameter. "He took her hand, and the iron of his eyes hammered against her own." This may seem exceedingly poetical to a matinee girl, but to me it seemeth not so.

Miss Warner's second book, "AN ORIGINAL GENTLEMAN" (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), is made up of a novelette and twenty-one short stories. The novelette has humor and briskness, and many of the short stories have their moments, too, but the excuse for binding certain others in a book does not appear. On what theory, for example, is the story entitled "Jane and Her Genius" included in this volume? Here we have a brief sketch of the sort that amuses one for a moment in a magazine and is then forgotten. It is well done, perhaps, but certainly it would be as absurd to read it a second time as it would be to read a newspaper editorial a second time. In the case of a few great masters we may overlook such things, and in order to have "The Taking of Lungtungpen" ever at hand we may tolerate the banality of "His Majesty the King," but the rights and privileges of the great masters belong to the great masters only. Miss Warner should be more resolute in the employment of the axe.

The idler in bookshops, alighting upon a volume called "I AND MY TRUE LOVE" (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50), might reasonably take it to be a tale of simple

sentiment, not unlike "The Reveries of a Bachelor," but, as a matter of fact, it is a bitterly serious psychological study. Naturally enough, I here employ the word "psychological" in its literary, and not in its scholastic sense. At the universities the professors of psychology are divided into two warring camps—the experimentalists of the laboratory and the experimentalists of the haunted house. The former stick pins into babies and time the hiatus between the stick and the yell, while the latter join the Society for Psychical Research and commune with the departed. Outside the breastworks entirely are the literary psychologists. These gentlemen (and ladies, for many of them are fair) devote themselves to the study of human ideas and the analysis of human motives, and, according as they are bold or modest, announce immutable laws or merely note exceptions and problems.

The author of "I AND MY TRUE LOVE" (H. A. Mitchell Keays) steers a rather uncertain middle course. She seems a bit in doubt herself as to the processes whereby her characters arrive at their acts. Her hero, a rich American dramatist, has long since divorced his wife, who has improved her leisure by marrying a millionaire, who, in turn, has gratified all hands by dying. The dramatist's daughter, as the story opens, is a young woman of nineteen years. She has been kept away from her mother since infancy, and now, lacking a pilot of her own sex, she has begun to labor heavily in the cross swells of love. Suddenly her father determines to send her to her mother. "I do not know what she thinks or what she wants, when it comes to the matter of men," he writes. "But I think you will know."

I have a suspicion that the father sees traces of certain unpleasant inherited traits in his daughter, and sends her to her mother in the hope that the latter will serve as a sort of horrible example or antidote, on the homeopathic principle of *similia similibus curantur*. Whatever his aim, his plan seems, at first, to be fatal, for the daughter

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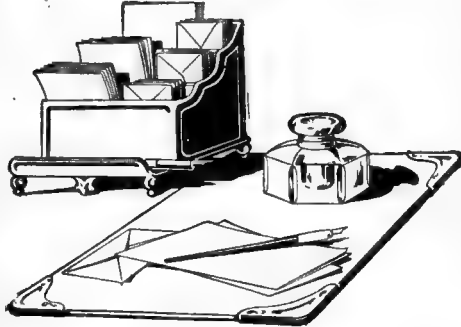
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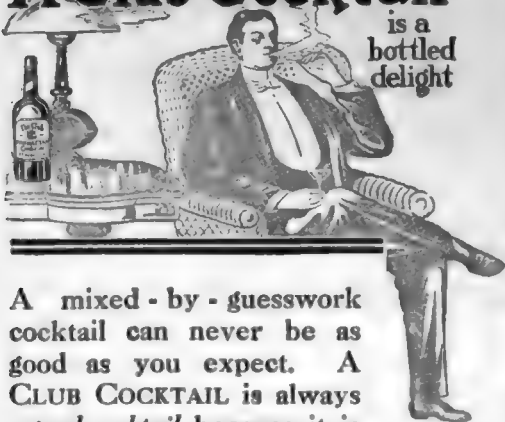
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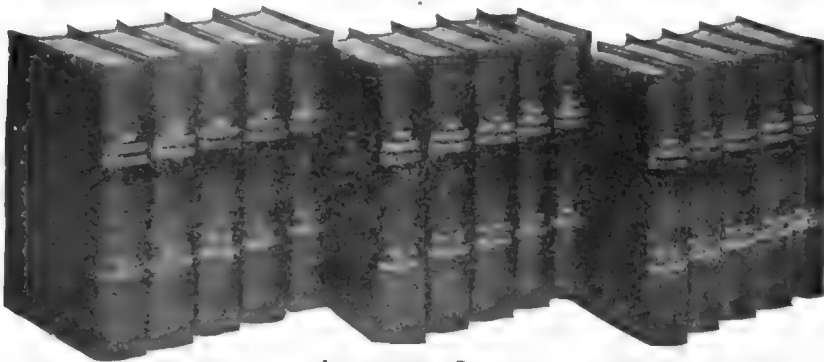
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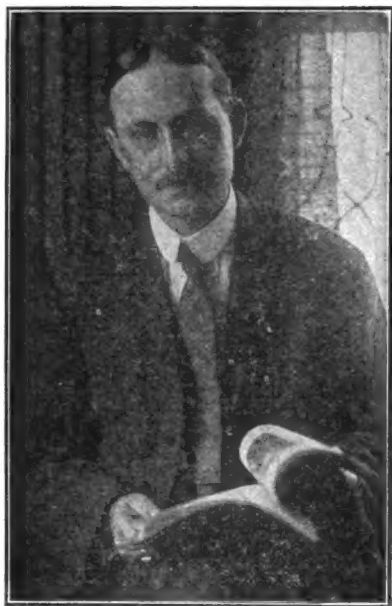
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